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Running head: GRADUATE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES OF THE BENEFITS AND
BARRIERS TO MENTORING PRESERVICE TEACHERS

Graduate Students' Perspectives of the Benefits and Barriers to Mentoring Preservice Teachers

by

Melissa C. Omeechevarria

A Dissertation submitted to the Department of Leadership,

School Counseling & Sport Management

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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This dissertation titled Graduate Students' Perspectives of the Benefits and Barriers to Mentoring Preservice Teachers

Dr. Kristine Webb, Committee Chair

Dr. Matthew Ohlson, Committee Member

Dr. Jeffrey Cornett, Committee Member

Dr. Amanda Pascale, Committee Member

Accepted for the Leadership, School Counseling & Sport Management:

Dr. Elizabeth Gregg, Department Chair

Accepted for the College of Education and Human Services:

Dr. Diane Yendol-Hoppey, Dean

Accepted for the University:

Dr. John Kantner, Dean of the Graduate School

DEDICATION

*I am thankful for my struggle because without it
I wouldn't have stumbled across my strength.*

Author Unknown

This work is dedicated to my family, who has been my constant support throughout this journey. It was not an easy journey, but it was definitely one worth experiencing. Your continued encouragement helped me to reach the finish line. I appreciate you more than you will ever know. This accomplishment is just as much yours as it is mine.

Love and many thanks to my:

daughter, Laurel Elisabeth Omeechevarria

mom, Sharon Omeechevarria

sister, Michelle Edmonds

nephews, Bradley Edmonds and Colin Edmonds

brother-in-law, John Edmonds

grandmother, Doris Kalle

grandparents, Marco and Liduvina Omeechevarria

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*We are all on this journey of life together, each given certain gifts
to make the world a better place and to help make one
another's burdens a little lighter along the way.*

Mike Ramsdell

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Abstract

Mentoring is an effective tool for the professional development of novice teachers (Eby & Lockwood 2005; Kram, 1985; Stanulis & Ames, 2009). Mentors to preservice teachers have conveyed that they receive benefits and face barriers when mentoring (Ambrosetti, 2014; Burk & Eby, 2010; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009). Graduate students who serve as mentors to undergraduates have also reported advantages and drawbacks to being a mentor (Conway, Eros, Pellegrino, Kras, Gale, & Campbell, 2009; Reddick, Griffin, & Cherwitz, 2011). This study examined the perceived benefits and barriers for graduate students serving as mentors to undergraduate, preservice teachers. It also considered the affect that graduate school had on a teacher's decision to engage in a mentoring relationship. The participants were all PK-12 teachers who were also graduate students in the College of Education and Human Services (COEHS) at the University of North Florida (UNF). The data for this qualitative case study was collected through semi-structured interviews. Findings yielded three themes (helps me, helps others, helps profession) which summarized the perceived benefits and barriers for graduate students mentoring preservice teachers. The results were connected to the Social Exchange Theory and it was determined that some graduate students will weigh rewards and costs before deciding to mentor, while others will lean more towards rewards or costs regardless. This study may have implications for undergraduate and graduate curriculum, mentor matching, and for mentor training.

Keywords: mentoring, mentors, teaching, education, benefits, barriers, graduate students, Social Exchange Theory

Chapter 1: Introduction

Mentoring has long been used as an effective tool for professional development (Eby & Lockwood 2005; Kram, 1985; Stanulis & Ames, 2009) across a variety of professions, including the field of education (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Okurame, 2008; Stokrocki, 2009). Frequently, mentoring involves a veteran and a novice, with the veteran serving as the mentor. (Ballantyne, Green, Yarrow, & Millwater, 1999; Hobson et al., 2009; Kram, 1988). A significant body of research demonstrates that novice teachers benefit from being part of a mentoring relationship. These benefits include emotional support, instructional modeling, orientation into the profession, and increased professional knowledge, all of which have led to less teacher turnover (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Mathur, Gehrke, & Kim, 2012; Normore & Loughry, 2006).

Researchers who study mentoring have also concluded that mentors benefit from the mentoring relationship (Burk & Eby, 2010; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Fluckiger, McGlamery, & Edick, 2006; Hobson et al., 2009; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009; Okurame, 2008; Stokrocki, 2009; Ulvik & Langorgen, 2012). Among the benefits that mentors may receive are increased critical self-reflection, validation, less isolation, and renewed commitment to their profession (Ambrosetti, 2014; Ballantyne et al., 1999; Boyer, Maney, Kamler, and Comber, 2004; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Hobson et al., 2009; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009; Jewell, 2007). Although mentors can receive benefits from mentoring, they may face barriers, or costs, when mentoring. Barriers include unmanageable workloads, lack of appreciation, disillusionment, and feelings of inadequacy (Ambrosetti, 2014; Bullough, 2005; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Hobson et al., 2009; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009).

Many universities use graduate students as mentors for undergraduates. Researchers have investigated these types of mentors and their findings show that graduate students experience similar benefits and costs to what was addressed in other mentoring literature (Conway, Eros, Pellegrino, & West, 2010; Evans, Perry, Kras, Gale, & Campbell, 2009; Reddick, Griffin, & Cherwitz, 2011). Although multiple studies focus on graduate students serving as mentors to undergraduate students, none of the literature specially focuses on using graduate students who are PK-12 teachers as mentors for undergraduate preservice teachers. It is unknown if graduate students who are PK-12 teachers experience the same benefits and barriers as other graduate student mentors. Universities often experience difficulties in finding quality mentoring, or Directing Teachers, for undergraduate preservice teachers. Because many universities have a population of graduate students who are practicing PK-12 teachers who could serve as mentors to preservice teachers, studying the perceived benefits, barriers, and motivation for graduate student mentors, who are also practicing teachers, could potentially add to the literature in teacher education. These results could have implications for teacher education and leadership programs in education at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

Problem Statement

Teachers may engage in mentoring relationships as a way to develop professionally (Hobson et al., 2009; Okurame, 2008; Stokrocki, 2009). Researchers have reported that novices as well as their mentors benefit from participating a mentoring relationship, while at the same time may face challenges (Burk & Eby, 2010; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Fluckiger et al., 2006; Hobson et al., 2009; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009; Okurame, 2008; Stokrocki, 2009; Ulvik & Langorgen, 2012). Graduate students often serve as mentors to undergraduate students, and

researchers have concluded that they experience similar benefits and barriers as other mentors who are not graduate students (Conway et al., 2010; Evans et al., 2009; Reddick et al., 2011).

What is not known is that if graduate students, who are also practicing PK-12 teachers, experience the same benefits and barriers when mentoring. This study aims to examine the perceived benefits and barriers of graduate students, who are also PK-12 teachers, to mentor preservice teachers. Additionally, it is not known how their experiences as graduate students in the field of education influence them to engage in the leadership activity of serving as a mentor to a preservice teacher. This study is important to practice because it may lend insight into university placement concerns for preservice teachers, inform decision making in undergraduate and graduate programs, and play a role in the way future students are recruited in teacher preparation and leadership programs (Reddick, Griffin, Cherwitz, Cerda-Prazak, & Bunch, 2012).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this case study is to discover the perceived benefits and barriers about mentoring among graduate students who are practicing PK-12 teachers and mentors or have potential to be mentors to preservice teachers. This study will examine their motivation to engage in the mentorship of preservice teachers at a public university in North Florida.

Research Questions

What do graduate students perceive as the benefits to mentoring preservice teachers?

What do graduate students perceive as the barriers to mentoring preservice teachers?

How do experiences as a graduate student influence the decision to engage in the leadership activity of serving as a mentor (Directing Teacher) to preservice teachers?

Theoretical Framework: Social Exchange Theory

The theoretical framework that supports this study is the Social Exchange Theory. This theory was first introduced in the mid-twentieth century by psychologists John Thibaut and Harold Kelley and sociologists George Homans, Peter Blau, and Richard Emerson. It was developed in part to be a predictor of human social interactions (Stafford, 2008).

Social Exchange Theory defined. The basis of the theory came from simple economics and was brought into sociology to describe human behaviors. At its core, Social Exchange Theory suggests that people look at benefits (rewards/positives) and barriers (costs/negatives) in experiences and then weigh them against each other to determine if they want to participate (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1958; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). While each of these theorists had a slightly different take on Social Exchange Theory, a commonality among all of them is the root in economic exchange (Stafford, 2008). In her synthesis of Social Exchange Theory, Stafford explained that “just as in profit-motivated economic exchange, decisions are based on projections of rewards and costs of a particular course of action” (p. 377). It is also important to note that Thibault and Kelley (1959) proposed that individuals can have both positive and negative experiences within the same relationship. Benefitting from the social interactions does not eliminate facing barriers as well.

Homans (1958) simplified his ideas of Social Exchange Theory with a simple mathematical formula, “Profit = Reward – Cost” (p. 603). In following this way of thinking, an individual would consider the rewards and the costs involved in the activity before deciding whether to participate or not. The early Social Exchange theorists proposed that “humans are seen as rationale creatures who, on some level, engage in a cost-benefit analysis; a weighting of the pros and cons of interpersonal interaction and relationships” (Stafford, 2008, p. 378).

Therefore, if their perceived profit is positive, then they are likely to engage in the activity. If the perceived profit is negative, then they may not opt to participate (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1958; Stafford, 2008; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Stafford (2008) does, however, point out that there is a major difference between economic exchange and social exchange. Social exchange involves interactions and relationships between individuals and that “social exchange relies on trust or goodwill” and is therefore elective by nature (Stafford, 2008, p. 378).

Since Social Exchange Theory centers around social interactions and therefore, the “give and take” nature of exchange between the individuals in the relationship is an important part of the theory (Stafford, 2008). The exchange of involves resources (Cook, Cheshire, Rice, and Nakagawa, 2008; Eby, Durley, Evans, & Ragins, 2008). Stafford (2008) reminded that resources are defined as “rewards when they provide pleasure and costs when they provoke pain, anxiety, embarrassment, or mental and physical effort” (p. 380). In the “give and take” in the relationship, Social Exchange Theory holds that the degree of interaction is also dependent upon the amount that a person’s self-interests are met and their need to be interdependent on another (Stafford, 2008). Rewards and costs may be perceived differently if they do or do not serve the self-interests of an individual or allow them to get what they desire from the other individual. Each person makes their own determination if the resource is a reward or a cost.

While Homans’ (1958) mathematical formula offered a simple explanation of the theory, decisions by individuals to engage do not always fit into such a neat equation. People are dynamic and their choices are not as black and white as they might be in an economic exchange. There are times when individuals face multiple costs, but still choose to engage because it is in the “best interest to cooperate so that both parties’ profits are maximized” (Stafford, 2008, p. 380). Blau (1964) emphasized the reciprocal nature of the social interactions. He felt that one

person in the relationship would participate as a way to help the other and that at some point in the future, the favor would be returned. Again, this relies on the premise that individuals experience trust and confidence in the relationship. Blau (1964) and Homans (1958) both also stressed that the profit may not be equal for each party. Issues such as power and influence can impact the relationship and inequalities may be experienced. When an equilibrium is not experienced, both parties must again analyze the rewards against the cost to determine if it is a good decision or not for them to continue to engage in the relationship.

Social Exchange Theory and mentoring. When analyzing social interactions in mentoring relationships, researchers have looked at mentor and mentee relations through the lens of Social Exchange Theory. Mentoring is one of many types of relationships that have been examined using Social Exchange Theory (Eby et al., 2008). Eby and associates concluded that “this theory is particularly well-suited for understanding mentoring since it is most applied to moderately intimate relationships” (p. 359). Rewards in a mentoring relationship for the mentor might include benefits such as “generativity, loyalty, enhanced job performance, rewarding personal experience, or recognition by others” while costs might consist of “protégé unwillingness to learn, sabotage, deception, and interpersonal difficulty” (Eby et al., 2008, p. 359). Furthermore, Ehigie, Okang, and Ibode (2011) emphasized that because of the nature of a mentoring relationship, participants often benefit intrinsically rather than needing to be rewarded extrinsically.

Current research has illuminated the fact that mentoring can be more reciprocal in nature, specifically that both the mentee and mentor can have positive takeaways from the relationship (Reddick et al., 2012). A few researchers have begun to connect Social Exchange Theory with mentoring to examine if mentors are recognizing benefits from participating and using that

knowledge to determine if they will partake in a mentoring relationship (Eby et al., 2008; Parise & Forret, 2008; Reddick et al., 2012). Social Exchange Theory proposes that “humans are rational, self-interested actors who want to maximize their own goals” (Reddick et al., 2012, p. 37). From their work with graduate student mentors, Reddick and associates offered that mentors might be participating in mentoring relationships not simply for unselfish reasons but because they see personal gain from the experience, a gain that they cannot receive independently. In their study of mentors in the business field, Parise and Forret (2008) found that mentors who volunteered for the role did so because they believed the experience to be personally rewarding. Several researchers have proposed highlighting benefits and barriers for the mentor as recruiting mechanism for future mentors (Allen et al., 2004; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Parise & Forret, 2008).

Authors of multiple studies have noted that more work needs to be done investigating mentoring relationships in terms of benefits, barriers, and motivation to engage in light of Social Exchange Theory (Kennett & Lomas, 2015; Parise & Forret, 2008; Reddick et al., 2012). This study sought to add to knowledge in this area. The aim was to discover the benefits and barriers to mentoring preservice teachers as perceived by UNF COEHS who are also practicing PK-12 teachers and eligible to mentor preservice teachers. Additionally, the goal was to gain insight from the participants on influences from being a graduate student that lead them to, or not lead them to, engaging in the leadership activity of mentoring. The researcher intended to examine the data collected from the three research questions through the lens of Social Exchange Theory. If graduate students conduct a cost analysis to determine if they will participate or not in mentoring relationships with preservice teachers, then Social Exchange Theory could help universities predict and plan for committed, positive relationships among mentors and mentees.

Overview of the Methodology

This study used a qualitative, case study approach. The case study method is appropriate here because this study sought to provide “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (Merriam, 1988, p.21).

Since this is a qualitative study, the selection of participants was purposive in order to collect information from a specific group of individuals (Creswell, 2013). Participants for this study were selected by using typical case and through snowball sampling strategies as appropriate (Creswell, 2013). Participants were solicited from a specific group of individuals and represented the normal or average within that group. Additional participants were retained through the recommendations of early participants. Participants had to be UNF COEHS graduate students who are currently enrolled or who have graduated within the last year. Additionally, they had to be practicing PK-12 teachers or have practiced as a teacher within the last three years. The participants may have mentored preservice teachers, but it was not a requirement. The decision was made to include participants that have not mentored because they could broaden the perspective with information such as perceived barriers that have kept them from mentoring.

Participants were recruited through multiple means. Following university guidelines, participants were contacted via student emails. The researcher also worked with UNF COEHS faculty to identify potential participants and to organize face to face recruitment during graduate classes. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the researcher recruited participants from the suggestions of early participants.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews and accompanying field notes. The researcher used semi-structured, open-ended questions during interviews (Creswell, 2013;

Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 1998). The interviews were scheduled at a time that was convenient for the participant. The interviewer prepared the questions ahead of time. Some questions were asked of everyone; however, the interviewer also allowed conversation and follow-up questions to flow naturally. The interviews were audio recorded. The number of interviews was dependent on the data collected, and interviews continued until no new data were presented (Merriam, 1998).

Interview audio recordings were transcribed after each interview. Data were analyzed simultaneously with continued data collection. The researcher employed the constant comparative method and continually compared data to additional data collected as well as to the literature reviewed in order to determine categories and themes (Creswell, 2013; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam, 1998; Yazan, 2015). This study developed credibility through triangulation, member checking, acknowledging researcher bias, and with the use of rich, thick descriptions (Creswell, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 1998). Comparing the findings to Social Exchange Theory was one way that the researcher sought to establish transferability (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Additionally, the researcher created dependability through transparency and by offering rationale for decisions made (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 1998).

Significance of the Research

A plethora of literature has been written on the use of mentoring as an effective professional development tool. Studies have demonstrated that mentees and mentors both benefit and experience challenges as they participate in mentoring relationships. Since the literature has already noted that graduate students also benefit from mentoring undergraduates, the findings from this study, looking specifically at graduate students who mentor preservice

teachers, could offer important insights to those in higher education. If locating effective, willing mentors for preservice teachers is a struggle for universities, they could use the findings about benefits and barriers as planning and/or recruitment tools. Having understanding of how mentors make decisions, in relation to perceived rewards and costs of Social Exchange Theory, can also assist programs in organizing and adjusting mentoring partnerships so that all parties feel as if they profit from the relationship. This study is significant because it can help fill the gap in the literature concerning the perceptions and motivation of graduate students who are also practicing teachers to engage in mentoring.

Locally, this study can be significant for the future of educational program for UNF, where this study was conducted. Since UNF faculty often have difficulties with locating adequate preservice teacher placements, the findings could help UNF more strategically match preservice teachers with mentors in the future. Knowing the perceived barriers that UNF COEHS graduate students experience when mentoring preservice teachers could provide faculty the opportunity to try to eliminate or lessen these difficulties. If UNF COEHS graduate students convey that the benefits of mentoring outweigh the barriers they face, faculty might be able to identify a larger pool of potential mentors for undergraduate preservice teachers. Knowing the perceived benefits could allow faculty the opportunity to use those as selling points to enlist new mentors from the graduate student population. If the findings encourage the practice of UNF COEHS graduate students mentoring undergraduate students, programs on both levels could alter their curricula to better prepare students to participate in mentoring relationships and offer enticement when recruiting new undergraduate and graduate students in teacher preparation and leadership programs.

Delimitations, Assumptions, and Definitions

Delimitations. Elements of this study were both under the control and out of the control of the researcher. The time, location, and sample of this study are delimitations that were controlled by the researcher. The time frame for data collection was limited to interviewing participants only in the Fall of 2018 and the location of the study was set for Northeast Florida. The researcher chose to include a small sample size of participants that were graduate students in only one university and practicing as teachers and mentors in only one, small region of the country. Additional challenges and limitations of qualitative studies and specifically case studies are addressed in Chapter 3.

Assumptions. Since not all elements could be controlled by the researcher, some things were taken for granted and assumed. The researcher assumed that all participants offered truthful and comprehensive answers to interview questions. An assumption was also made that the response of the participants reflected their opinions and actions in their professional and student roles. Furthermore, it was assumed that the participants included in this study were a representative sample of the entire case of individuals.

Definitions. Some of the important terms are defined below to offer an operational definition to the reader.

Mentoring Relationship – an association between individuals (typically two) that is formed in order to grow another individual professionally;

Mentee – the individual in the relationship that is receiving the mentoring;

Mentor – the individual in the relationship that is offering the mentoring;

Novice – an individual with little or no experience; beginner;

Veteran – an individual with experience in a particular field or situation;

Preservice Teacher – a university student completing observation, field, or student teaching hours in a classroom; a teacher who has not obtained a fulltime teaching position;

Benefit – a positive takeaway; a reward or gain;

Barrier – a negative; a challenge or obstacle.

Organization of the Study

This study was organized in five chapters, following the typical dissertation structure (Roberts, 2010). After the first introductory and significance chapter, a review of literature is shared in Chapter 2. The literature review begins with a broad focus on mentoring and funnels down to what is known about graduate students serving as mentors to undergraduate students. In Chapter 3, the specifics of the methodology are presented. More details on the qualitative approach to a case are also explained. Chapter 4 reports the results of the study to the reader. Finally, the study concludes with Chapter 5 where conclusions and recommendations are discussed. Implications for practical application as well as ideas for future research are included.

Chapter Summary

Mentoring is an effective tool for the professional development of individuals in many careers, including in the field of education. Research has shown that mentors feel they benefit from participating in mentoring relationships and it is not just the mentee who gains from the experience. It has also been determined that mentors experience barriers when mentoring that can detract from the positive gain that the relationship may offer. Studies have shown that graduate students, in a variety of fields, who mentor undergraduate students experience the same benefits and barriers to those of the general mentor population.

Social Exchange Theory is a theoretical framework that suggests that individuals weigh the benefits (rewards) and barriers (costs) before entering into a relationship with another individual. The theory posits that people will only participate in the relationship if they feel the rewards outweigh the costs and that they will finish with a positive gain. Social Exchange Theory has been studied in association with mentoring relationships and found to be applicable in these types of situation.

A gap in the literature comes at the convergence of these ideas. It is not known if graduate students, who are also practicing PK-12 teachers, experience the same benefits and barriers as other mentor teachers. It is not known if their motivation to enter into a mentoring relationship with a preservice teacher is the same as other mentors. Additionally, it is not known if this type of mentor abides by the principles of Social Exchange Theory when making their decision to engage in mentoring preservice teachers. The aim of this study was to fill some of this gap in knowledge.

The implications of this case study are important to the field of education. Based on the findings, teacher preparation programs can make better decisions on how to best match preservice teachers with mentors, Directing Teachers. Universities can make changes to their existing teacher preparation and leadership programs on both the undergraduate and graduate levels based on the findings concerning benefits, barriers, and motivation. Recruitment of future education students may be affected at both collegiate levels by the new knowledge from the findings of this study. The implications are far reaching.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Search Process

In order to comprehend and identify topics in the field, an extensive review of the literature on the topic of mentoring in education was conducted. Databases included ProQuest, ERIC, Education Source, and JSTOR using key search terms: mentor, mentoring, mentee, preservice teachers, benefits and barriers of mentoring, social exchange theory, teacher retention. The following filters were applied to include literature within the last five years and studies conducted in the English language. In some cases, older seminal articles were included to identify historical information, and to locate primary sources from article reference lists. Approximately, 150 articles meeting the search criteria were located and reviewed. After appraisal, about 41 articles were determined to be applicable to this study and therefore, included in this literature review.

Introduction

According to Roberts (2010), the purpose of a literature review has a host of purposes that included the following: (a) providing a concentration and historical setting for the study, (b) defining key elements to be investigated, (c) determining what research has been done in an area along with identifying the important scholars, (d) shaping the study's significance, and (e) connecting the study to prior studies. Piantanida and Garman (1999) emphasized that the review of literature should be thorough enough that a reader without previous knowledge of the subject area can feel confident that they can understand the context of the study. Furthermore, the literature should uncover what still needs to be study and to offer rationale for conducting the investigation (Machi & McEvoy, 2012).

This review of literature follows the protocol listed above. It defines for the reader the mentoring relationship and how relates to transformational leadership. Ideas are funneled from the broad topics of benefits and barriers in mentoring and narrowed to the insights of graduate students who choose to mentor. The literature review describes the known the benefits (e.g. relationships, confidence, increased skills) and barriers (e.g. time, lack of support, negative experiences). Knowledge about graduate students serving as mentors, as well as their professed benefits and barriers, are included. The review of literature concludes after building a case for the need to study specifically graduate students who are practicing PK-12 teachers, and their perceptions about the rewards and costs to mentoring preservice teachers.

Mentoring Defined

Mentoring has long been present in society as one individual helping to grown another individual is not a new phenomenon. In modern times, seminal work on mentoring was completed by Kathy Kram, a professional who worked in the field from 1973 to the present. Hartmann, Rutherford, Feinberg, and Anderson (2014) summarized Kram's definition of mentoring as "a relationship between a more experienced individual, the protégé, intended to provide the protégé with professional and personal development" (p.1). Other researchers who have studied mentoring specifically in the field of education, have followed Kram's lead and advocated that a mentoring relationship is primarily between a veteran teacher and a novice teacher (Eby et al., 2010; Hellsten, Prytula, Eubanks, & Lai, 2009; Hudson & Hudson, 2010; Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005). Kram's definition of mentoring is also widely accepted and referred to outside of the field of education (Ehigie et al., 2011; Parise & Forret, 2007; Veeramah, 2012).

Traditionally, the type of mentoring relationship structure that Kram described between a veteran and a novice (Kram, 1985) has been typically viewed as a one-way relationship (e.g. the directing teacher and preservice teacher relationship). The focus of a traditional structure, along with early mentoring research, has customarily centered on the advantages for the novice participant in the relationship. The veteran is responsible for handing down knowledge and guiding the newer colleague and therefore, the novice benefits (Ehigi, Okang, & Ibode, 2011; Kwan & Lopez, 2005).

Fortunately, researchers have conducted studies that demonstrated how both parties of a mentoring relationship can find gain from the experience. Some of the research identified, examined, and described different mentoring structures such as reciprocal mentoring. Among the examples of structures is reciprocal mentoring; two persons of more equal experience levels participate in a back and forth mentoring approach (Ballantyne et al., 1999; Boyer et al., 2004; Jewell, 2007; Reddick et al., 2011). Researchers have discovered that both participants benefit in a reciprocal style mentorship since both are considered the protégé and the mentor at different points in the relationship (Boyer et al., 2004; Jewel, 2007).

While reciprocal mentoring has proven to be a worthwhile venture for two veterans, more recent studies have demonstrated that there are benefits to both parties in the traditional mentoring structure as well (Hudson & Hudson, 2010; Mathur et al., 2012; Shillingstad, McGlamery, Davis, & Gilles, 2015; Stanulis & Ames, 2009). Most of the body of literature on the benefits of mentoring has focused on the mentees or the organizations, but a growing number of studies highlighted the benefits to mentors (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Hobson et al., 2009; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009; Jewell, 2007; Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005). Although this is exciting news, more research still needs to be done in this area (Eby et al., 2010).

Before sharing the benefits of mentoring that have been investigated, an additional issue concerning the definition of mentoring must be discussed. Oftentimes, the terms mentoring and coaching are used interchangeably. These two terms are closely related but are two separate entities, therefore it is imperative that a distinction be made. According to Passmore (2007), mentoring may be more informal and “career-focused” while coaching is more formal and “performance-focused” (p.13). Lord, Atkinson, and Mitchell (2008) defined mentoring as “being concerned with the growing individual, both professionally and personally” and coaching as narrower and concerned with “specific areas of performance and job outcomes” (p. iii). Although teachers who supervise preservice teachers may participate in activities with their mentees that might be considered both mentoring and coaching, the relationships between directing teachers and preservice teachers in this study will be labeled as mentoring. This decision was made because the majority of the work accomplished in the mentoring of preservice teacher focuses on the comprehensive growth of the novice.

Benefits Gained from Mentoring

Many novice teachers enter the workforce each year, but unfortunately, only about a third of them will survive to complete five years of teaching (Shaw & Newton, 2014). Novice teachers leave the profession within those first years for a variety of reasons, and the loss is very costly to schools and school districts (Hughes, 2012). The good news is that the literature reports that novice teachers that participated in mentoring relationships tended to be happier, more successful, and have higher retention rates (Eby et al., 2010; Fluckiger et al., 2006; Hellsten et al., 2009; Hobson et al., 2009; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004). Organizations then benefit from mentoring because when teachers stay longer, districts experience turnover and ultimately save money (Hughes, 2012; Ingersoll & May, 2012; Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, & Felsher,

2010). An additional benefit to this equation is how mentors benefit in the mentoring relationships. Mentors of novices tended to reflect on their own practice, become more competent and confident, continued to open-minded, and remained active learners (Hudson & Hudson, 2010; Stanulis & Ames, 2009).

Benefits for organizations. The literature established that mentoring benefited the organization as a whole. Ulvik and Langorgen (2012) found that mentoring provided occasions for growth for both the teacher and the school. Hobson, and associates (2009) and also Okurame (2008) noted that mentoring increased the level of collegiality and team collaboration amongst coworkers. Hobson et al. cited, "Staff came to know each other better, which led to their increased collaboration and enjoyment" (p. 210).

Mentoring encourages an environment where teachers feel they can contribute more to their organizations. For example, mentors start the relationship as the ones who are the givers of information, but over time, mentors often begin to feel comfortable enough to go to their mentees for guidance and direction when they had professional needs of their own (Hobson, et al., 2009). Additionally, in a non-empirical study, Goodyear (2006) determined that mentees believed mentoring allowed them to contribute a greater influence on their organization. Both the mentee and the mentor learn that they can benefit from mutual support. Furthermore, in their literature review of articles reporting on novice teacher mentoring programs, Hobson et al. noted that school personnel considered that mentoring established a natural environment of professional development. Teachers in schools where mentoring was practiced, were more likely to learn and grow from each other.

Higher levels of collegiality and collaboration led to more positive work environments. Goodyear (2006) recognized that mentees benefited by gaining more understanding of their

roles, greater fulfilment in career choice, and higher salaries. She also acknowledged that mentees were more likely to remain with their company. Similarly, Hobson et al. (2009) mentioned that mentoring encouraged permanency in the teaching profession. They stated, “Teachers who are mentored have been found less likely to leave teaching and less likely to move schools within the profession” (p. 210). Organizations benefitted from this in that they have less turnover. Teacher turnover can be expensive for school districts and induction programs with mentoring incorporated within them have proven to be helpful in lessening the amount of teacher turnover (Carr, Holmes, & Flynn, 2017; Coronado, 2009; Martin, Andrews, & Gilbert, 2009; Goodyear, 2006; Hughes, 2012; Waterman & He, 2011). Ulvik and Langorgen (2012) echoed this conclusion. They agreed that mentoring led to greater commitment to the organization and that members were less likely to leave after participating in quality mentoring.

As mentioned, less teacher turnover is advantageous fiscally to an organization as well as less burdensome to its employees. Hobson et al. (2009) emphasized not only that mentoring provides a natural environment of professional development in schools, but that because of this scenario, mentoring can be a very cost-effective tool for growth for schools. Mentoring allows teachers who are already serving in teaching capacities to further develop their peers at the same time. Little or no money is needed to implement this professional development tactic and is therefore financially a plus for the school and the district.

Benefits for mentees. University programs for preservice teachers, as well as teacher induction programs, often use relationships with experienced teachers as a key element to the education of novice teachers (Hellsten et al., 2009). In Australia, where educators are working to improve preservice teacher programs, researchers have found that mentors are essential to positive changes in practice (Hudson & Hudson, 2010). Ehigie, Okang, & Ibode (2011) echoed

these findings when they wrote that growth for the mentee is “the primary outcome” in a mentoring relationship (p.399). Novice teachers leave universities with a great deal of knowledge that aids them in leading successful careers. Even so, Hellsten and associates (2009) found in their study of novice teachers in Canada, that well-educated novices still have a great deal more to learn. They suggested that mentoring relationships can offer the assistance that novices require and mentees can benefit from the relationship.

Mentee: Benefits of professional development. Professional development often involves the transferring of knowledge from one individual to another. When mentees participate in mentoring relationships, knowledge is transferred to the mentees, and mentor teachers indeed gain professionally. Fluckiger et al. (2006), who assembled stories from both mentors and mentees, specifically advocated that novice teachers benefit when a mentor teaches alongside them in a team-teaching situation. The mentee benefits because they see firsthand how the lesson could be conducted. Suggestions from the veteran are not lost but are modeled clearly. Additionally, mentees may experience stress because they have exhausted their current set of instructional strategies. To help mentees with this stress, Fluckiger and associates also suggested that mentors can assist by proposing fresh ideas for instruction. Novice teachers, as well as their students, profit with new approaches to teaching and learning that could be offered by their mentors. Moreover, novices become more familiar with classroom assessments, as required by the school or district, by working with mentees (Mathur et al., 2012).

Through mentoring, mentors help develop the skills of novice teachers. Mentors observe, coach, and provide feedback and can therefore assist their mentees in developing their instructional practices (Childre & Van Rie, 2015; Hudson & Hudson, 2010). Typically, mentor teachers are veterans with years of experience in education, and with their experiences comes

knowledge of the teaching field. Mentees professionally develop as they spend time with their mentors, glean professional knowledge from them. The skill set of the novice teacher is enhanced through the efforts of the mentors (Martin et al., 2009; Shillingstad et al., 2015).

Beyond instructional strategies, mentees benefit with professionally with help in other areas of the classroom. Hobson et al. (2009) identified that novice teachers were more competent in the area of behavior and classroom management skills as a result of mentoring. Additionally, Hobson et al. found that mentees were more capable of managing assignments and time than other novices. Okurame (2008) agreed with these findings when he wrote, “mentoring affords the transfer of skills which protégés can apply in diverse professional circumstances, promotes productive use of knowledge, clarify of goals and roles...” (p. 46).

Gaining the ability to self-reflect on one’s practice is another benefit to mentees in a mentoring relationship. Developing teachers who are being mentored have improved reflection and problem-solving skills (Hobson et al., 2009). Jewell’s (2007) work focused on experienced teachers who chose to be mentored, instead of novice teachers requiring mentoring, but her findings were similar. In her work, mentored teachers grew in self-reflection skills and could more readily find solutions to their own challenges. Jewell reported that mentees were more metacognitive and insightful about their needs as well as cognizant of the importance of the mentoring experience on their teaching. She further expressed that “these reflective experiences cause the teachers to be more mindful of their responsibilities to their students and their teaching practices, and the process enhanced the teachers’ personal and professional growth” (p. 301).

Mentee: Benefits socially and emotionally. The first few years or month in a profession or job may be taxing on an individual; the newness and the unknown can be draining. Even well-trained novices may feel inadequate in their surroundings, thus increasing their stress

levels. Participation in a mentoring relationship may be among the remedies to the problem of stress with novice teachers. Several scholars have concluded that participation in a mentoring relationship may assist in eliminating the amount of stress for the mentee (Okurame, 2008, Stokrocki, 2009). Novice teachers who have mentors may feel less overcome with their new situations when paired with successful veteran teachers, the mentors.

In addition to stress, novice teachers may have feelings of isolation. With teachers frequently being the only adult working in a classroom at a time, novices may struggle with this seclusion. Successful mentoring relationships can aid in this area as well. Hobson and associates (2009) found that mentees feel less alone in their role when supported by a mentor. Fluckiger et al. (2006) found that mentees benefitted from team teaching with veterans, which corroborates the conclusions of Hobson and associates. Novices profit from the direct support that is available when working in the same physical space as their mentor.

As has long been noted with social learning theory, people learn best when in communal settings. The same is true with novice teachers. Okurame's (2008) work with Nigerian educators established that, in a mentoring relationship, learning happens for the mentee in the interaction with the mentor as the mentor models appropriate behaviors. The mentees would not benefit in this manner if they were not included in a social setting like mentoring. Additionally, novices benefitted socially, emotionally, and psychologically when participating in positive mentoring relationships (Hobson et al., 2009; Okurame, 2008). Feeling less isolated and more involved in social learning may help novices grow professionally. Furthermore, mentoring has been found to aid novices in having a greater sense of trust and acceptance into a group (Hobson et al., 2009; Ulvik & Langorgen, 2012).

Novice teachers who are experiencing a higher level of trust amongst their peers may feel safe enough to give back to those who have helped them. In mentoring relationships, the mentees gain not only from what they receive from the mentor, but mentees can also benefit when they are able to offer new knowledge back to their mentors (Boyer et al., 2004; Ulvik & Langorgen, 2012). Not having the feeling that the mentoring relationship is one-sided can bolster the confidence of the mentee. Hobson et al. (2009) and Jewel (2007) found that novice teachers experienced better self-esteem and confidence as a result of working with a mentor. Jewell additionally suggested that mentoring is advantageous because it boosts teacher morale.

Over time, when the mentee is able to give back to the mentor, the relationship becomes more reciprocal in nature. Boyer et al. (2004) wrote about the comments a mentor made when she realized her mentee could see that she, the mentee, was able to reciprocate the help in their mentoring relationship. A mentor, in Boyer and associates' study, recalled when her mentee realized this, she saw that the "reciprocity in their professional relationship energizes and sustains each of them" (2004, p. 142). This statement aligns with the findings of Ulvik & Langorgen (2012) that mentees gain confidence when the relationship becomes reciprocal.

Other social and emotional gains for mentees include psychosocial support from their mentors. In their study of mentoring relationships, Eby et al. (2010) discovered that mentees benefited by increasing their "self-efficacy, self-worth, and professional identity" (p. 812). The mentors in their study reported more acceptance and appreciated new friendships formed through mentoring. Eby and associates also concluded that mentees strengthened their general well-being as well as their mental health from these relationships. Also, the relationship building element of mentoring helps to develop the emotional and social characteristics of novice teachers (Martin & Sifers, 2012; Passmore, 2007; Shillingstad et al., 2015).

Mentee: Benefits concerning career. Beyond professional development and social and emotional improvement, participating in a mentoring relationship has long term, positive effects for the mentee in terms of overall job satisfaction and upward mobility in their careers. Multiple researchers concurred that novice teachers were more content with their career choices and employment after having participated in successful mentoring relationships (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Okurame, 2008, Stokrocki, 2009). Stokrocki further discovered that mentees were more productive in their work after mentoring occurred. Mentees were also able to benefit from more networking opportunities (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009). Iancu-Haddad and Oplatka explained that mentors were able to connect their mentees with a larger assembly of professionals and offer them more exposure and prominence than a mentee would have been able to obtain on their own. Likewise, mentees benefitted from increase salaries and promotions as a result of mentoring (Allen et al., 2004; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Okurame, 2008). In 2010, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) advocated that preservice teachers need to work with successful mentor teachers in real world settings in order to be best prepared for the profession.

Several research studies have shown that novices who work with mentors are in general happier with their career choices, feel more supported, and are more realistic about their roles as teachers (Hellsten et al., 2009; Hudson & Hudson, 2010). Growing in self-concept, thinking outside the box, and increasing understanding of others have also been recorded as ways that mentoring develops the novice teacher (Hudson & Hudson, 2010). Moreover, Mathur et al. (2012) discussed that novice teachers that participated in quality mentoring programs showed more student growth due to professional development than did peers who were not mentored.

Benefits for mentors. As has been previously noted, mentees profit from participating in mentoring relationships. What is of equal importance is that mentors also benefitted from these experiences. A veteran faculty member and mentor in a study conducted in an Australian college by Boyer et al. (2004) emphasized this point when he stated, “When you’ve got the younger teacher working with a more experienced teacher like myself, often young teachers have theories and ideas that we need to share, we really need to know” (p. 143). The mentor further supported the idea of mentors gaining when he concluded, “When their knowledge is pooled, they both benefit enormously” (p. 143). It is imperative, however, to recognize that while both the mentor and the mentee experience benefits from participating in a mentoring relationship, the individual profits are unique to each group (Ballantyne et al., 1999). The benefits to the mentors that were highlighted in the review of the literature were grouped into categories and presented as such in the following subsections in alphabetical order (Table 1).

Table 1. Benefits for Mentors determined from Review of Literature

Benefits Gained from Mentoring for Mentors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits Concerning Career • Benefits Concerning Leadership • Benefits Concerning Relationships • Benefits of Classroom Assistance • Benefits of Increased Skills • Benefits of Legacy • Benefits of Revitalization • Benefits of Self-Esteem and Satisfaction • Benefits of Self-Reflection

Mentor: Benefits concerning career. Some mentors are attracted to mentoring because of the ways they believed it advanced their careers. Not all mentors are paid for mentoring, but

some researchers have determined financial compensation has been received by some, and this compensation is viewed as a benefit of the mentoring relationship (Ghosh & Reio, 2013; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009). In addition, some mentors have attributed job promotion as well as better job performance in part to their efforts to mentor novices (Ghosh & Reio, 2013).

Beyond money and promotion, other mentors believed they profited from the praise and recognition that they received from their administrators and coworkers (Gilles & Wilson, 2004; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009; Okurame, 2008; Parise & Forret, 2008). Okurame noted that mentors who were acknowledged for working effectively with a mentee believed this effort advanced their reputation within their organization. Administrators and peers would see the mentors as more successful because of the work that they did with their mentee (Okurame, 2008; Ragins & Scandura, 1997). In his case study, Bullough (2005) discovered similar results. He wrote, "Barbara invested heavily in the mentoring role, hoping that if she did so the value of the work would be acknowledged and appreciated" (Bullough, 2005, p. 147). Healy and Welchert (1990) concurred with these results. In their research, they found that mentors believed a benefit of mentoring was superiors recognizing their work as a mentor, and this recognition could lead to new responsibilities.

Having new responsibilities at work was perceived as a positive by mentors (Gilles & Wilson, 2004; Parise & Forret, 2008). Sometimes new responsibilities resulted in newly found freedom to pursue opportunities. After participating in a special mentor training program, veteran teachers voiced that administration let them implement new ideas and participate in more committees, even some outside of their own schools (Gilles & Wilson, 2004).

Mentor: Benefits concerning leadership. Beyond receiving praise and recognition, the literature also reflected that serving as a mentor assists teachers in building their leadership skills

(Hudson & Hudson, 2010). As noted already, mentor teachers are often given the chance to lead professional development and this offers them the opportunity to strengthen their ability to lead (Gilles & Wilson, 2004). For the mentor teachers working with preservice teachers in rural Australia, the notion of being a role model was presented. One mentor stated, "I knew she was watching me" and that reinforced her to need to act as a leader within her classroom and school (Simpson et al., 2007, p. 489).

Mentor: Benefits concerning relationships. Mentor teachers are also gaining in terms of relational skills from participating in mentoring relationships. The relationships themselves have been determined to be a benefit. Conway and Holcomb (2008) acknowledged that with several music teacher mentors that they surveyed desired communication with their peers and that it was frequently the impetus for mentors participating in mentoring relationships. In their findings, Barker and Pitts (1997) concurred when they noted that the "emotional support or friendship" were among the top benefits to mentors (p. 222). In their review of the literature, Kennett and Lomas (2015) found that 21% of the studies on mentoring in an educational context referenced "collegiality/networking" as a benefit (p. 31). Moreover, the mentors examined by Gilles and Wilson (2004) were afforded the opportunity to participate in additional training as mentors, which is not the case for all mentors. These particular mentors noted they benefitted from the relationships that they were able to build with other mentors through this additional program. They were not as isolated as before and appreciated the chance to network with other mentors as well as with university partners.

Additionally, just as students learn well in social settings, several studies have concluded that mentors improve professionally simply by learning from others, specifically their mentees (Conway & Holcomb, 2008; Hobson, et al., 2009; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009). The

reciprocal, or relational, nature of mentoring relationship was how mentors gained in other ways. Some studies noted that as the mentoring relationship progressed between a veteran and a novice, there were periods of time where the roles switched and mentor was learning from the mentee (Ambrosetti, 2014; Hobson, et al., 2009; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009; Trubowitz, 2004). The mentors studied by Healy and Welchert (1990) reported that they could only find the mentoring relationship worth their efforts if they felt they could take something from the knowledge of their mentee. Healy and Welchert wrote that “mentors, no less than protégés, may require assurance that their partners will give as well as receive” (p. 20). Research conducted by Hobson et al. (2009) and Iancu-Haddad and Oplatka (2009) also demonstrated that mentor teachers appreciated relationships that came from working with novices in the field.

Mentor: Benefits of classroom assistance. Increasing leadership and relational skills were advantageous for mentor teachers, but some conveyed simply having extra assistance and ideas in their classrooms from novice teachers was a benefit. Multiple studies on mentoring reported mentors enjoyed having additional teachers in the classroom (Hudson & Hudson, 2010; Jaspers, Meijer, Prins, & Wubbels, 2014; Simpson, Hastings, & Hill, 2007). Jaspers et al. (2014) found in their study of mentors in the Netherlands that even though they received no money or additional training for mentoring, it was well worth having preservice teachers in order to have lower ratios of teachers to students. A mentor in their study explained that having preservice teachers “provided opportunities to divide the class into two groups, to teach collaboratively, to engage in other educational activities with the children that were too complicated to manage with only one teacher” (Jaspers, Meijer, Prins, & Wubbels, 2014, p. 112). The mentor further clarified that an additional teacher in the room allowed her to completed more tasks and that she was able to save time in her day.

Simpson and associates (2007) received similar responses from mentors. They reported that “the ‘extra pair of hands’ theme flowed through the narrative of positive professional outcomes for the co-operating teachers” (p. 488). Again, in this situation, mentors were afforded lower teacher to student ratios and it benefitted the students. Mentors noticed they had more time to build relationships with students and meet their educational needs when more than one teacher was present. The Australian mentors also highlighted the strengths of the preservice teachers as positive additions to their classrooms. Their preservice teachers were gifted in multiple areas, like in the arts, technology, or even in parent communication. The mentors felt it was beneficial because their mentees could enrich the lives of their students with these talents and that was something they wouldn’t have been able to offer them otherwise.

Mentor: Benefits of increased skills. In addition to the help gained with additional classroom assistance, mentors benefit from mentoring by increasing their own skills as educators. In studies examining the benefits of mentoring, mentors have reported that they have gained fresh outlooks on their profession and organizations as well novel ideas and new teaching styles after having served as mentors (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Hobson, et al., 2009). Parise and Forret (2008) reported that “mentors may benefit by learning new skills, such as those related to emerging technologies, from their proteges” (p. 226). Additionally, Eby and Lockwood (2005) determined that mentors improved their managerial skills by working with mentees, while Hobson et al. (2009) discovered that the mentoring relationship afforded mentors the opportunity to increase their communication skills. In general, mentors who are developing their skills are better equipped on how to assist both their mentees and their other peers and, therefore, have the potential to make a greater impact in their roles.

The chance to develop professionally through mentoring has been perceived as an advantage by veteran teachers working with novices in the field (Hudson & Hudson, 2010). In their literature review, Hobson and associates (2009) also found that mentors were offered additional professional development opportunities than their peers. For examples, some mentors were given training and support from universities when mentoring pre-service teachers. Depending on their situation, some mentors are also relieved of classroom duties for periods of time to attend professional development or to have focused time to mentor (Gilles & Wilson, 2004). Beyond having extended time in professional development, Gilles and Wilson also noted that mentors appreciated the opportunities to interact with other leaders and occasionally lead professional development. An interesting finding, when investigating benefits to mentors, was that mentoring also allowed veteran teachers to participate in professional development while not taking them out of the classroom. Oftentimes, strong teachers leave the classroom teacher role to pursue educational growth. Robinson (2005) suggested that mentors can professionally develop while being practicing teachers, it is the best of both worlds.

Mentor: Benefits of legacy. Demonstrating altruistic mindsets, mentors also have reported that their ability to leave a legacy in their profession as an advantage to participating in mentoring relationships. Goodyear (2006) wrote that mentors “relish the opportunity to influence those who will carry on in the profession (p. 52). Iancu-Haddad and Oplatka (2009) confirmed this idea when stating “the mentors perceived mentoring as making a difference for the children, the school, and the school system” (p. 54). Mentors saw this as a chance to transfer their value systems to the teachers of the future in hopes that they could positively influence their choices and make a difference in the world (Hudson & Hudson, 2010; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009). More than one study noted that mentors viewed their work as a way be immortal and to

live on for generations to come (Parise & Forret, 2008; Ragins & Scandura, 1997). Additionally, Iancu-Haddad and Oplatka (2009) had mentors express that a benefit to mentoring was their ability to pay it forward. The mentors noted their appreciation for mentors that had invested in them and enjoyed mentoring as a way to “return the favor” that has been done to them (p.53).

Mentor: Benefits of revitalization. While mentoring may afford mentor teachers advantages in their careers, it also offers the opportunity changes of heart. Many mentors have expressed that serving as a mentor allows them to become revitalized and more committed to their profession (Ambrosetti, 2014; Ballantyne et al., 1999; Boyer et al., 2004; Gilles & Wilson, 2004; Hobson, et al., 2009; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009). Ragins and Scandura (1997) highlighted that the boost in mentor energy might be attributed to the youthful perspective and ingenuity of their proteges. Hudson and Hudson (2010) agreed with this finding when they wrote that mentor teachers are inspired to improve when “observing innovative practice from mentees” (p. 158). Moir and Bloom (2003) “found that mentoring offers veteran teachers professional replenishment” when studying mentors involved in the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project (p. 58). Moreover, mentors report that when the relationship become more reciprocal in nature it “energizes and sustains” them (Boyer, et al., 2004, p. 142).

Mentor: Benefits of self-esteem and satisfaction. Increased self-esteem and satisfaction with their job are additional benefits that mentors have named as a result of participating in mentoring relationships. Several researchers have demonstrated that mentors believed that their self-image increased after serving as a mentor (Ballantyne et al., 1999; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009). Mentors viewed themselves more as an expert after having worked with their mentees. They also attributed increased feelings of pride and fulfillment in their jobs, when they observed their mentees being successful (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Gilles & Wilson, 2004; Hobson, et al.,

2009; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009). In one study, a mentor acknowledged that, “being asked to mentor was in itself a badge of honor, recognition of teaching skill” (Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009). Likewise, when reviewing literature on the benefits of mentoring, Hobson et al. commented that some mentors profited by feeling “validated” in their work by university personnel (2009, p. 209).

Increased confidence has also been reported as a benefit to serving as a novice. In their study of mentor teachers that participated in a special teacher induction program, Gilles and Wilson (2004) reported improved confidence as one of the benefits of their inclusion of the program. There were similar findings in the work that Simpson and associates (2007) completed with mentor teachers working in rural Australia. After working with preservice teachers, one new mentor stated that she “overcame the nervousness and anxiety that had loomed in relation to working with the preservice teacher” once she could appreciate the knowledge and skills she had obtained in her years of teaching (p. 487).

An additional theme in the literature was that mentors felt more satisfaction with their job performance and career choice as a result of mentoring (Ghosh & Reio, 2013; Gilles & Wilson, 2004; Ragins & Scandura, 1997). Martin and Sifers (2012) surveyed youth mentors in The Brother Sister Program. According to these researchers, “confidence is associated with higher levels of mentor satisfaction with the mentoring relationship” (Pp. 943-944). After studying mentors that had participated in a year-long district mentoring program, Mathur et al. (2012) declared that the mentors with whom they worked perceived themselves as more confident as teachers by the end of the year. The work of Kennett and Lomas (2015) repeated these conclusions. After conducting in-depth interviews with four experience mentors, they wrote that mentoring helped the mentors with “boosting their self-worth, self-efficacy, and confidence” (p.

35). The mentors they spoke with felt content and believed their job as a mentor to be a worthwhile venture.

Mentor: Benefits of self-reflection. Self-reflection was another noted benefit to mentors. Stokrocki (2009) defined self-reflection as “reflexivity, a process of making one self-aware of one’s immersion in everyday and popular culture to examine one’s own position” (p. 139). As mentors offer assistance to their mentees, they naturally begin to look at their own practice. Self-examination that comes with reflection allows mentors to ask questions and that leads to change (Martin & Sifers, 2012). Mentoring forces the mentor to self-reflect in ways that may not have been automatic if they weren’t mentoring (Ambrosetti, 2014; Boyer et al., 2004; Hudson & Hudson, 2010). In Boyer and associates’ case study of two teachers at an Australian secondary school, they found this to be the situation. The mentor in their study stated that mentoring required self-reflection when he stated, “I was put into a situation where Bev was depending on some answers...that forced me to confront my practices, which in turn, led me to examine my teaching journey of the past 35 years” (Boyer et al., 2004, p. 140). Fluckiger and associates’ (2006) work was a collection of the stories of mentor teachers. After examining the mentor’s responses, they determined that the mentors encouraged self-reflection for their mentees and for themselves. They concluded that self-reflection is crucial to a teacher’s continual improvement, and that it can be accentuated in a mentoring relationship.

Another study of mentors, who worked with preservice teachers in rural Australia, reported that self-reflection was a way to make what was once private now public (Simpson, Hastings, and Hill (2007). Since they were being observed, mentors needed to discuss with their mentees what the mentees had observed in their classrooms. The mentors believed that self-reflecting on their practices in the classroom gave them the chance to increase their creativity

and ways of thinking (Simpson et al., 2007). Other mentors testified that by working with novices, they were able to determine their own strengths and what they valued most, which propelled them forward (Hobson, et al., 2009). Gilles and Wilson (2004) learned through focus groups with mentors, that self-reflection allowed mentors the opportunity to reassess their own values and beliefs as well as to consider the viewpoints of their mentees. Furthermore, Mathur and associates (2012) discovered that not only did mentoring help increase the practice of self-reflection among mentors, but that it also improved their abilities to self-reflect.

Barriers Faced in Mentoring

The reported benefits for partaking in a mentoring relationship are numerous. However, it is important to point out that mentoring participants did not only describe positive aspects of the process. A review of the literature has also uncovered barriers that are also faced by both mentors and mentees when participating in a mentoring relationship.

Barriers for mentees. Mentees experience challenges in mentoring relationships just as do mentors. At times, those barriers are the same for both parties. One of those shared barriers is poor mentor-mentee matches. In fact, in their research, Eby et al. (2010) claimed that partner mismatches were perceived as the top barrier for mentees in a mentoring relationship. Beyond, poor partnering, mentees reported time as challenging in mentoring situations. Mentors with large workloads presented problems for mentees trying to coordinate times to meet with their mentors (Barrett, Mazerolle, & Nottingham, 2017). Furthermore, mentees felt that mentors who appeared to be uninterested, manipulative, negative, not committed, or unprepared also caused conflict in the mentoring relationship (Barrett et al., 2017; Eby et al., 2010). Wong and Wong (2013) determined additional barriers faced by mentees, including mentors who were controlling,

who blurred lines between professional and personal lives, mentors with incorrect motives, and mentors with misaligned values.

Barriers for mentors. Not every mentor has a positive experience mentoring novices in their field. The barriers can be costly for the mentor and researchers have found that some mentors equate mentoring “the task as akin to punishment” with the addition of more responsibilities, little time, and a lack of support (Simpson et al., p. 483). The barriers to the mentors that were highlighted in the review of the literature were grouped into categories and presented as such in the following subsections in alphabetical order and ending with the barrier of a general negative experience (Table 2).

Table 2. Barriers for Mentors determined from Review of Literature

Barriers Faced in Mentoring for Mentors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers of Absence of Training • Barriers of Anxiety and Distraction • Barriers of Displacement • Barriers of Lack of Support • Barriers of Limited Collaboration • Barriers of Poor Mentor-Mentee Matching • Barriers of Power • Barriers of Time and Workload • Barriers of a General Negative Experience

Mentor: Barriers of absence of training. Some mentors are afforded the chance to participate in mentoring training. Businesses, school districts, universities, and other organizations may offer training in order to grow mentors. Not all mentors have been given this opportunity and therefore, label it as a barrier to mentoring. In their literature review, Hobson et al. (2009) found that many mentors expressed not receiving training for their new role as a

mentor. A good teacher does not automatically make a good mentor. Mentors are often very motivated to develop their skills but can become frustrated when not offered adequate professional development in mentoring (Hudson & Hudson, 2010). When studying mentors who participated in a university training in order to mentor novice teachers, Iancu-Haddad and Oplatka (2009) noted that appointing mentors to work with novices without training is problematic. A first-time mentor recounted her experiences and wrote, "being a cooperating teacher requires a unique set of skills (as I later discovered), some of which are different from those of teaching a classroom of students" (McCann & Johannessen, 2009, p. 115).

Mentors who are not well-equipped for their positions will not be effective. This was also evident in literature outside of the field of education. Veeramah (2012) reviewed literature in the field of nursing and determined that nursing mentors also felt unprepared to be mentors and that this caused them to feel overcome with stress when serving as mentors to nursing students. Ambrosetti (2014), when conducting an investigation on mentors working with university students, wrote that "a lack of confidence on the part of the mentor teachers about how to provide worthwhile experiences for pre-service teachers will remain if preparation for mentoring is not provided" (p. 40). Ozcan and Balyer (2012) emphasized that finding "qualified mentors for these new teachers is a major challenge" (p. 5414). Yet, mentors are still asking for more training in order to lift this barrier to mentoring.

Mentor: Barriers of anxiety and distraction. Typically, the individuals selected to mentor novices are professionals who excelled in their current roles. If already struggling with a lack of time to do their jobs well, mentors also face barriers in terms of anxiety and distraction when trying to complete all tasks. Veeramah (2014) discovered that the nursing mentors that he surveyed struggled with being an effective mentor and still completing their clinical roles. Their

priorities were their patients and they explained that mentoring often distracted them from that job. Mentors who are teachers expressed similar frustrations. Jaspers et al. (2014) shared that mentor teachers fought with balancing how to give preservice teachers the capacity to try new things and work through difficulties while also feeling a loyalty to their students, wanting to make sure students are gaining, and students not regressing in the classroom at the hand of their mentee. Mentors sometimes feel that mentoring sidetracks them from their main foci (Jaspers et al., 2014).

Furthermore, mentor teachers have shared that they experience anxiety when determining when to share responsibilities with their mentees and when to intervene on behalf of them. Mentor teachers, teaching grades 1-8, felt apprehensive with turning the responsibility of their classes over to the preservice teachers, deciding how much latitude to give their mentees, and how fast to transfer those responsibilities (Jaspers et al., 2014). Additionally, when they observed their mentees performing poorly in the classroom, they were anxious for the well-being of their students and struggled with intervening or remaining silent. They felt responsible to ensure correct instruction for their students but also had to take into account the need for the preservice teachers to be trusted and seen as authorities in the classroom (Jaspers et al., 2014). Clearly, these barriers caused anxiety for mentors. To add to this, scholars in the literature illustrated that some mentors experienced feelings of insecurity as mentors (Hobson et al., 2009). In their research on mentoring in a non-educational setting, Eby and Lockwood (2005) found this to be true when one mentor remarked, “just because you are a mentor doesn’t mean that you are ‘all knowing’ ...feeling like you might be letting your mentee down” (p. 452). Mentors may exhibit confidence in their abilities in their daily roles, but they often feel inadequate to serve as mentors.

Mentor: Barriers of displacement. While mentees conveyed that mentoring has positive outcomes on their futures with organizations (Allen et al., 2004; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Okurame, 2008), mentors reported that a cost of mentoring can be that they are displaced from their job as a result. Some mentors in business contexts felt that the mentoring relationships can “turn into an unhealthy form of mutual exploitation” and that “mentors run the risk of being displaced by successful proteges or backstabbed by opportunistic ones” (Ragins & Scandura, 1997). Displacement was also felt by mentors when they had mentees that were constantly around, like a preservice teacher in a classroom. They felt a loss of personal space and privacy (Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009). In addition, mentors commented that they can be viewed as granting unfair advantages to their proteges and that these perceptions can ruin the future of both parties of the mentoring relationship (Ragins & Scandura, 1997).

Mentor: Barriers of lack of support. Another mentor perceived barrier to mentoring was a lack of support. Veerameh's (2012) study on mentoring and nursing students found that mentors perceived they did not receive the desired support from both their administration and from the universities. Some mentors were deterred by the lack of acknowledgement from their supervisors. Clarke and associates (2015) relayed mentors' feelings when they reported that mentoring “does not get any recognition” and that it is “not formally recognized” (p. 373). One researcher, who conducted in-depth interviews with one mentor as part of a case study, came to the same conclusion about mentoring not being highly regarded by administration. Bullough (2005) shared that the mentor he studied kept quiet about her concerns with her interns. She believed that if she talked about struggles with her interns to her superiors, she would be viewed as incompetent.

Mentor: Barriers of limited collaboration. Although some mentors reported that a benefit of mentoring was an increase in positive interpersonal relationships, other mentors believed a barrier to the process was a lack of collaboration. This idea of isolation was evident in the findings from Hobson et al. (2009) when they reviewed literature on mentoring. More than one article in their review reflected that mentors experienced loneliness in their roles. A resistance for mentor teachers to share with each other might be a cause of their feelings of isolation. In his case study of the perceptions of one mentor, Bullough (2005) shared that his mentor felt separated from other teachers when she accepted the mentoring role. The mentor articulated this feeling when she said, “I don’t think there is anybody who really knows or understands what I am trying to do or what is taking place” (p. 150). Ozcan & Balyer (2012) interviewed administrators as part of their research on negative factors affecting mentoring. The administrators shared thoughts such as “knowledge sharing is insufficient among teachers and it stems from teachers’ unnecessary pride” and “when some teachers want to share their useful knowledge or experience, they are perceived as priggish” (p. 5416).

An interesting discovery from Ozcan and Balyer’s work that may contribute to feelings of loneliness from mentors were the communication and relational barriers among participants. The study was conducted in Turkey and is an investigation among teachers of how they gather and have conversation. Ozcan & Balyer also noted a distinction in mentor perceptions about collaboration in connection to their ages. Younger mentors reported being more open to partnering professionally than did the older ones in their study.

Mentor: Barriers of poor mentor-mentee matching. A review of the literature also highlighted a lack of thoughtful mentor-mentee matching as a mentor perceived barrier (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Hobson et al., 2009; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009). Mentors and mentees

are matched in multiple ways, depending on the organization or structure of the mentoring program. Goodyear (2006) revealed that oftentimes mentors are assigned by an organization or human resource department where the individuals doing the matching are not necessarily familiar with either party being paired. He also pointed out that this type of pairing not only increases the risk of a problematic match, but that “these programs often focus on moving employees toward the organization’s goals, which may or may not be consistent with the employee’s needs” (Goodyear, 2006, p. 53).

Eby and Lockwood (2005) found similar information in their study. In fact, they stated that “mentor-protégé mismatches is one of the most commonly noted problems according to both proteges and mentors...the formality of the relationship can lead to uncomfortable interactions” (Eby & Lockwood, 2005, p. 450). They also drew attention to the fact that “there may be motivational differences among participants” and that this changes between formal and informal mentoring situations (p. 444). Iancu-Haddad and Oplatka (2009) found that a gap in age among the partners can cause a gap in attitude or approach in the classroom which also causes conflict. In addition, mentors noted that geographic separations, communication differences, and time schedule variances were elements that should have been taken into account when partnering mentors and mentees (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Martin & Sifers, 2012). Hence, if appropriate attention has not been put into the strategic matching of mentors and mentees, the improper forming of the partnerships can be a perceived barrier for mentors.

Mentor: Barriers of power. Beyond frustrations with poor mentor-mentee matching, mentors can face barriers of power in mentoring relationships. If mentors are part of a structured mentoring program, they can often be asked to evaluate the mentoring process. This is counterintuitive to their thinking in that serving as a mentor is regularly considered to be solely a

formative, supportive experience. Conway and Holcomb (2008) found that mentors struggled with trying to offer support and simultaneously evaluating their mentees. In their research, Hudson and Hudson (2010) encountered similar findings. They noted a tension between the roles of mentor and assessor among the mentees they studied. Another barrier faced by mentors was when the mentee did not respect the expertise of the mentor (Gilles & Wilson, 2004). Without a lack of a healthy respect for each member's role in the relationship, mentors felt the mentoring experience was costly.

Mentor: Barriers of time and workload. The review of literature on barriers offered a variety of reasons why mentors are frustrated, but no topic seemed to be a more prevalent trend than a lack of time to effectively complete the task of mentoring and/or their other jobs. Mentors expressed concern with not receiving any extra time for undertaking additional assignments or that they were promised more time and that promise did not come to fruition (Bullough, 2005; Hobson et al., 2009; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009; Veeramah, 2012). This was evident with mentors that were teachers, but also with mentors who practiced in other fields like nursing (Jaspers et al., 2014; Veeramah, 2014). Furthermore, mentors are not often given release time to mentor, therefore, their additional tasks are piled upon their everyday responsibilities. Mentors report struggling with retaining a healthy balance in life while also being expected to be effective with an unmanageable list of things to accomplish (Hobson et al., 2009; Hudson & Hudson, 2010; Jaspers et al., 2014; Simpson et al., 2007; Veeramah, 2014).

When mentors are not allocated separate time to mentor, the researchers have provided evidence that mentors had to decide where to get the additional time. Jaspers et al. (2014) learned that mentors in the Netherlands had to find time when the students weren't present in order to have good conversation with their mentees. Some mentors stated that "time for

discussion tended to be 'fragmented' and not easy to find" and that much of their interactions with their mentees was improvised and not thoroughly planned (Clarke, Killeavy, & Ferris, 2015). Clarke and associates also noted that some mentors expressed frustration with not having adequate time to collaborate with peers who were also mentoring. Hudson and Hudson (2010) also described that mentors were frustrated by a lack of time to build relationships prior to, and during the mentoring process. Overall, researchers found that mentors felt exhausted and overwhelmed by the time and work commitment that it required to mentor well (Ambrosetti, 2014; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009).

Mentor: Barriers of a general negative experience. A combination of many barriers may lead to an overall negative experience mentoring for mentors, and a negative experience can be a barrier in itself. Several researchers have found that negative experiences can be more powerful than positive experiences in deciding how effective mentoring will be and how likely participants are to partake in another relationship (Burk & Eby, 2010; Eby et al., 2008; Hartmann et al., 2014; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009). Mentors often attribute negative experiences to the behavior of the mentees; laziness, lack of trust, disrespect, failure to meet deadlines, reluctance to learn or take feedback, poor communication, or bad attitudes were mentioned by mentors (Eby et al., 2008; Eby et al., 2010; Okurame, 2008). One of the mentors in Iancu-Haddad and Oplatka's (2009) study of Israeli mentors stated "when she doesn't do his part then it falls to me... It's annoying that I keep pushing and pushing him, and he just doesn't get started" (p. 57). The mentor's feelings were further described when the researchers explained "new teachers she was assigned to help rejected her expertise" and she "left the mentoring role she was involved in and expressed no desire to return" (p. 57).

The barrier of negative experiences has the potential to be the greatest barrier that mentors experience when participating in a mentoring relationship. Mentors working primary education in the Netherlands “explicitly stated that they wished they did not have to perform their mentoring tasks or even did not want to be an MT [mentor teacher] ... when the ST [student teacher] had a negative or impolite attitude” (Jaspers et al., 2014, p. 111). Curiously, Ozcan and Balyer (2012) found that teachers with more experience often held more negative attitudes about mentoring than those who were less experienced. In addition, some researchers recognized that negative experiences for mentors came from other elements such as sabotage or manipulation by their mentee, feelings of competing against other mentors, and proteges projecting a bad image of the mentor to the organization (Eby et al., 2010; Hartmann et al. 2014; Parise & Forret, 2008). All of these situations further created barriers for mentors in the mentoring process.

Mentoring and Leadership

Definition of educational leadership. Mentors who serve as directing teachers to preservice teachers are typically experienced classroom teachers who are given the opportunity to further develop their leadership abilities. In their 2009 work, Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd presented a definition of educational leadership that included, “Leadership that causes others to do things that can be expected to improve educational outcomes for students” (p. 70). This definition captures the work that veteran teachers are doing with preservice teachers. The mentors in these relationships are serving in the capacity of teacher-leaders as well as being a part of the greater educational leadership community in their schools. “Educational leadership is not limited to those in formal leadership positions and has much in common with the concept of teacher-leadership,” according to Thornton (2014, p.19).

Qualities of effective leaders. Research on mentor teachers suggested that they demonstrate similar qualities to those of effective leaders. When Orland-Barak and Hasin (2014) studied exemplar mentors, they determined that “mentors acted as leaders in their ability to empower, promote autonomy, raise motivation, and encourage reflection” (p.234). Clarke and associates (2015) echoed these shared qualities and added the characteristic of inspirational to the list, while Shillingstad et al. (2015) found that, “quiet, resilient, innovative, knowledgeable, skilled, and courageous” should be added (p.19). Mentor teachers lead successfully when they utilize their experience as a tool to promote change (Orland-Barak & Hasin 2010; Shillingstad et al., 2015). These veteran teachers oftentimes have experienced different roles within their schools, having responsibilities related to such things as curriculum or professional development or having worked as a team lead. Each of these roles, added with a mentor’s knowledge of research, standards, and effective instructional strategies gives them a strong knowledge base to lead the next generation of teachers (Orland-Barak & Hasin 2010; Shillingstad et al., 2015).

Mentors as teacher-leaders. Teacher-leaders, in the form of mentors to preservice teachers, have the opportunity to promote change in schools and in education in general. Several studies on mentor teachers report that mentors are either seen as or view themselves as change agents (Clark et al., 2015; Orland-Barak & Hasin, 2010; Thornton, 2014). Being in the position of peer with other teachers, yet serving as a teacher leader, has allowed mentors to realize the important responsibility of their role and understand that they are often a bridge between fellow teachers and administration. Furthermore, Clarke et al. (2015), who surveyed mentors of teachers in a new teacher program, wrote that mentors felt they were responsible “to provide positive leadership” and to pay attention to the climate and culture of their schools (p.372).

Through their leadership, mentor teachers develop their mentees, but also grow professionally themselves. Oplatka (2006) alleged that teacher mentors often surpassed their general responsibilities as a classroom teacher and presumably outperformed their peers who are not mentoring. Ehigie et al. (2011) further noted that the mentoring works in a forward-looking manner. A mentor serves as a teacher leader when developing new teachers. Then, those new teachers grow and develop and possibly become the next teacher-leaders. This pattern can then continue with future generations. Ehigie and associates agreed that improving leadership skills, through mentoring is a way for teachers to make gains workwise. Classroom teachers can advance themselves professionally through mentoring.

Thornton (2014) surveyed 130 new teacher mentors about being viewed as educational (or teacher) leaders. Results showed that an overwhelming percentage of the mentors were content with the label of educational leader for their work with novice teachers. To further clarify, Thornton noted that the survey participants that did not agree with this title had less years of teaching experience themselves and felt uncomfortable being seen as a leader in the mentor role. Whether or not mentor teachers view themselves as teacher-leaders, being in the position of mentor allows them the chance to have a larger influence on the education profession than if they were only working with a classroom of students. Villani (2005) proposed that the leadership of mentor teachers could potentially impact entire schools. If this is the case, then the role of teacher leader and mentor cannot be taken lightly. Mentors heavily influence the behaviors and knowledge of their mentees (Shillingstad et al., 2015). Administration and university and induction programs must support mentors so they can grow and serve at their greatest potential.

Preparing teacher-leaders. In his study of mentors, Thornton (2014) expressed that the title of mentor teacher does not always equal teacher leader; a leader must be developed because this designation is not an automatic. Processes can be put in place to assist mentors in their shifts from classroom teachers to teacher leaders. Hudson and Hudson (2010) argued that preparation is key. According to their work, “suitable mentors must be prepared in their roles as preservice teacher educators” (p.159). Hudson and Hudson felt mentors must be prepared to reflect upon and judge both themselves and their mentees. Thornton (2014) advocated that professional development for mentors should include, “having a deep understanding of the learning process, fostering connections between people...understanding the context in which their schools operate, thinking critically” (p. 19). In addition to professional development, Thornton found that mentors need chances to exercise their leadership skills and to be backed by other leaders as they spread their wings. Furthermore, Thornton suggested that mentors need to be selected carefully, and that attention needs to be paid to the leadership potential of new recruits because mentors need to be openminded and willing to learn.

Thornton (2014), in discussing the development of leadership skills, also emphasized that mentoring must be appreciated when he wrote, “When mentoring is valued...mentoring can flourish and mentors can be effective not only in supporting beginning teachers but also in positively impacting learning and teaching in the wider community” (p. 29). Orland-Barak and Hasin (2010) echoed similar ideas in their work when emphasizing the need for mentor teachers to be developed and entrusted. They noted that this type of support for mentors allows them to become transformative rather than transactional in their leadership.

Effective Mentoring as Transformational Leadership

Definition of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership can be defined as “the process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower” (Northouse, 2010, p.172). It contrasts transactional leadership in that transactional leaders are not as worried about taking themselves or their followers to a higher level but are more interested in exchanging one thing for something else” (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Transformational leadership first became widely accepted as a leadership approach with the work of James MacGregor Burns in 1978 and was extended by the work of Bernard Bass in 1985 (Northouse, 2010).

Qualities of transformational leaders. Transformational leaders have specific qualities that characterize their perspectives. According to Bass (1990), the qualities of a transformational leaders include the following: charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (p. 22). Transformational leaders encourage their followers to think outside of the box and put forth extra effort and are typically perceived as being more effective than a leader who is not transformational in nature (Bass, 1990). In their study, Scandura and Williams (2004) made connections between the work of mentors and the work of transformational leaders. For example, they wrote that “idealized influence and the attribution of charisma in transformational leadership reflect high levels of respect [which is] consistent with mentoring” (p. 451). Additionally, Scandura and Williams noted that effective mentors focus on the needs of each protégé individually and that this aligns with the individualized consideration promoted by transformational leaders.

Mentors as transformational leaders. Mentors of preservice teachers may demonstrate transformational leadership qualities in the work they do as a mentor. Scandura and Williams

(2004) discussed that transformational leaders and mentors have similar goals. They noted that both mentors and transformational leaders focus their attention on assisting colleagues with moving forward professionally, being happy at work, retention, and overall performing at their greatest potential. Scandura and Williams further pointed out that transformational leaders are able to emotionally connect with their juniors in order to influence thinking and that “the mentor role has been conceptualized as transforming since the protégé develops into a more competent and satisfied individual through the leader’s focus on long-term goals” (p. 452). Furthermore, they suggested that “leaders may need to serve as mentors to activate transformational leadership and promote positive work attitudes and career expectations of followers” (p. 448).

The mission of a mentor teacher aligns with the mission of a transformational leader. Transformational leaders put an emphasis on relationship building and in mentoring, creating trust is a crucial element in order for a mentor to positively influence their mentee (Passmore, 2007). Orland-Barak and Hasin (2010) connected transformational leaders and mentors together when discussing their similar approaches to big picture thinking. They suggested that a transformational leader would “regard the mentor as a person with a vision who helps the group into becoming autonomous by encouraging them to set goals rather than solve immediate matters” (Orland-Barak & Hasin, 2010, p. 429). Mentors, working as transformational leaders, would be inspiring followers to utilize creativity when looking for solutions to problems, which is often the practice for mentors working with preservice teachers (Bass, 1990; Orland-Barak & Hasin, 2010). Furthermore, Scandura and Williams (2004) point out that “transformational leaders reinforce competences and skills that keep the organization competitive” and “communicate a vision that motivates employees to exert extra effort” (p. 449). These are also

goals for many mentor teachers, thus reinforcing that effective mentors are acting as transformational leaders.

Graduate Students as Mentors

Mentors come from a variety of backgrounds and positions, but an interesting mentoring arrangement at universities is the pairing of graduate students with mentees who are undergraduates. The literature has shown that this type of structure is in place with students in the same field of study as well with students at the same university but in different disciplines. While Reddick and associates (2012) stated that the concept of graduate students profiting from mentoring is one that has not been researched enough that mentors do experience benefits and barriers, like mentors in general.

Utilizing graduate students as mentors. University faculty members are frequently occupied with teaching, research, and service activities or projects related to tenure. Graduate students are more readily available option for mentoring undergraduates (Reddick et al., 2011; Reddick et al., 2012). Graduate students are seeking opportunities for personal growth or are already working directly with undergraduates and are a “more accessible option for mentorship considering that they often have more time than faculty members” as well as the preferred choice for undergraduates who may feel intimidated working directly with faculty members (Reddick et al., 2012, p. 38). These researchers further explain that graduate students are often already closely involved with undergraduates through participation by both parties in research projects. Additionally, Dolan and Johnson (2006) also emphasized that graduate student mentors are also more likely to be closer in age to undergraduates than university faculty.

Graduate students who eventually want to work in a university setting also crave the opportunity to gain more experience working with undergraduates. The more exchanges

graduate students have with undergraduates, the more opportunity they have to be prepare for their future careers in education (Conway et al., 2010). Reddick et al. (2012) shared that when mentoring, graduate students “gain access to important resources” and are given the opportunity to strengthen leadership skills when offering criticism and assisting their mentees.

In addition, several scholars have shown that undergraduates react positively about being mentored by graduate students. Sometimes, faculty members may be too intimidating for students beginning their careers. An undergraduate in a study on graduate mentors in music education, commented that “what has helped me is hearing stories from graduate students: their experiences and what they have been going through... what they are learning now, and how they could have applied it to their teaching” (Conway et al., 2010, p. 57). The undergraduate said this interaction served as a catalyst to thoughts about what path they wanted to take or what they could use in their teaching. Conway et al. (2010) pointed out that being mentoring by a graduate student gives an undergraduate insight into masters’ or doctoral programs. Undergraduates might not have been considering graduate school until interacting with a graduate student. This type of mentoring structure can open the door for more undergraduates to pursue graduate degrees.

Likewise, a graduate student mentor, working with music education students, remarked that “it’s nice to get the perspective of someone who has been in the field sooner rather than a lot of professors have” (Conway et al., 2010, p. 57). Undergraduates feel a greater connection to, and ease with graduate students than they do faculty members because they see them as more equals. Conway et al. (2010) noted that when undergraduates feel they are “subordinates” and not “part of the club,” they do not grow as naturally as they could in a different type relationship, like one with a graduate student.

Benefits to graduate students as mentors. As with mentors in general, graduate students who serve as mentors also describe benefits that can be gained from serving in this role. The benefits range from personal to professional gains. In addition, the literature demonstrated that some third parties, looking at this relationship from the outside, believe that the benefits to the graduate student mentor are as great as the benefits received by the undergraduate mentee (Evans et al., 2009).

Graduate student benefits: Satisfies altruistic desires. Frequently, mentors may enter into mentoring relationships as a means to fulfill their needs to help humanity. A review of the literature found that this mindset was present in the benefits conveyed by graduate student mentors. Graduate students, in the Intellectual Entrepreneur mentoring program at the University of Texas Austin, included 'paying it forward' as a profit in serving as a mentor as many of them had benefitted from the guidance of a graduate student when they were undergraduates (Reddick et al., 2011). In a sister study, the researchers emphasized this idea when they wrote "strong mentoring and advising begets more strong mentoring and advising" (Reddick et al., 2012, p. 44).

Beyond a 'pay it forward' mentality, graduate students believed they benefitted by assisting others when helping to build diversity in higher education. It was mentioned several times in the work from the University of Texas Austin that there was an underrepresented population of minorities in the Intellectual Entrepreneurs program. Graduate students mentoring in this program explained that they could contribute to increased diversity by offering these undergraduates a strong mentoring experience in hopes that they will continue to graduate school and increase the population of minorities in their respective fields (Reddick et al., 2011; Reddick et al., 2012). One mentor was quoted as saying the Intellectual Entrepreneurs mentoring

program “has given me the tools so that I could reach out to another fellow student of color and guide her through her experiences and the others she will face in the future” (Reddick et al., 2012, p. 43). The same mentor also explained that it was a goal of hers in graduate school to find a program where she could directly contribute to assisting minorities like herself.

Mentoring as way to gain personal fulfillment was a recurring theme in the literature. Clinical psychology graduate students conveyed that being a mentor “can be a gratifying experience, one that provides a unique opportunity to foster the interest of undergraduate research assistants in the research process in a very hands-on way” (Evans et al., 2009, p. 81). Graduate student mentors, like mentors in general, also appreciated having personal needs met through mentoring because of its eventually ability to be reciprocal in nature (Reddick et al., 2011). Reddick and associates (2011) gave a good summary of the altruistic benefits to the graduate students in the Intellectual Entrepreneurs program when they wrote that the graduate mentors “were also being socialized to use their intellectual capabilities for the good of others” and then further implied that “IE served as a vehicle to provide graduate students with the opportunity to merge scholarship and civic engagement” (p. 65).

Graduate student benefits: Improves experience as a graduate student. Beyond personal fulfillment, mentors have also profited from mentoring by becoming better graduates. Reddick et al. (2012) remarked that “mentors’ relationships with their mentees provided them with a greater understanding of both themselves and their discipline” (p. 41). Being more familiar with their field of study and the hidden curriculum were noted as benefits as well (Reddick et al., 2011; Reddick et al., 2012).

Working with an undergraduate mentee also assisted graduate student mentors in reevaluating themselves as graduate students. One mentor expressed that “working with my

mentee helped me to stop and think about what I am trying to accomplish as a graduate student, what is most important to me, and the challenges that lie in the process” (Reddick et al., 2012, p. 42). Another mentor went explained that “in assisting my intern to assess her goals, values, and desires for her graduate education, I was simultaneously reassessing my own position within a graduate program” (Reddick et al., 2012, p. 42). A third graduate student mentor, in this same study, also shared that mentoring undergraduate students caused her to value her opportunities as a graduate student and to keep that in the forefront of her mind.

Reddick and associates (2012) also highlighted that serving as a graduate student mentor increased the thirst for learning and appreciation of subject matter in graduate students. Moreover, researchers articulated that “there is no better way to learn material than by having to teach the information yourself” (Reddick et al., 2011, p. 62). In a study on graduate student mentors who were also music educators found that mentors grew in their knowledge when given the opportunity to interact with other graduate students mentoring in music (Conway et al., 2010). These music educators appreciated bouncing ideas off of fellow graduate student mentors without the pressure of perceived judgement from university faculty.

Graduate student mentors in the Intellectual Entrepreneurs program “expressed their personal enjoyment, identified gains in productivity, and appreciated having opportunities to develop their skills in mentorship and the direction of research” as a result of mentoring undergraduates (Reddick et al., 2012, p. 38). The growth as students gained by graduate students as they mentored undergraduates has been an exciting benefit for program directors as well. Reddick et al. (2011) pointed out that programs can highlight the benefits of mentoring as a selling point to potential students entering their programs.

Graduate student benefits: Building professional skills. While graduate student mentors felt they benefitted from serving as mentor in terms of growing as a graduate student, they also perceived the gain in professional skills as another advantage of the experience. Oftentimes, graduate students have goals to become faculty in higher education, leaders in schools, or in administration after graduation. Mentors described that serving as a mentor to undergraduates offered great opportunities to build the skills that are necessary in their future endeavors. In a study on graduate music students mentoring in music education classes, the conclusion was made that “graduate music students may learn skills and models in teacher education that will benefit them in their careers as master teachers or supervisors” (Flowers & Coddington, 1990, p. 78).

Reddick and associates (2012) stressed that “while graduate programs appear adept at assisting students in their development of skills and abilities to conduct research, little attention is focused on developing skills necessary to engage in other aspects of a faculty career” (p. 46). These researchers concluded from their findings that when graduate students serve as mentors to undergraduates, they are able to experience some of the roles of faculty members and gain the necessary skills prior to officially holding the position. In their work with graduate psychology students mentoring undergraduate psychology students, Bettencourt, Bol, and Fraser (1994) found that graduate students gain in the following skills: “learn to supervise, better prepared for teaching, learn organizational skills, better prepared to conduct own research, be more productive” (p. 967). Dolan and Johnson (2006) attribute stronger communication skills in graduate students to their work mentoring undergraduates. Attaining these skills now will benefit graduate students who later move into faculty positions.

Additionally, Barker and Pitts (1997) determined that mentoring aided graduate students in developing leadership skills. They found that graduate student mentors could practice being a leader without being required to exercise authority. Furthermore, Barker and Pitts (1997) felt graduate students learned to “observe and diagnose their groups” (p. 228) while Reddick et al. (2011) highlighted that they “develop needed advising and mentoring skills” needed for future roles (p. 61).

Graduate student benefits: Supports future goals. In connection with benefitting from the addition of needed skills and increased depth of content knowledge, the literature revealed that graduate students who are mentors also gain support for their future career and life goals (Barker & Pitts, 1997; Dolan & Johnson, 2006; Phillips & Wells, 2014; Reddick et al., 2011; Reddick et al., 2012). Graduate students mentoring and tutoring middle school students reported “getting familiarized with various school systems, potential research interests, professional development, academic outcomes [for middle school students] among the benefits taken from their mentoring experiences (Phillips & Wells, 2014). Mentors in the Intellectual Entrepreneurs program pointed out that the leadership skills gained from mentoring could be easily utilized in future in a variety of professions (Reddick et al., 2011; Reddick et al., 2012).

Some graduate students felt that mentoring gave them the chance to reaffirm their future career goals, to decide if this was the path or not that they wanted to take (Reddick et al., 2011). One graduate student mentor held that mentoring offered the chance to “solidify the choices I have made or propel me to make appropriate adjustments to my graduate career” (Reddick et al., 2011, p. 62). Reddick and associates (2012) also expressed that graduate student mentors simply gain “a great deal of personal enjoyment” which they will hold fast to in their futures (p. 38).

Barriers for graduate students as mentors. While graduate students who serve as mentors most likely face several barriers, this information is far less present in the literature. In the study on graduate students at Howard University mentoring and tutoring middle school students in a lab school, the graduate student mentors reported facing challenges at the beginning of their experiences (Phillips & Wells, 2014). Their unfamiliarity with the process of mentoring and working with middle school students in a school initially caused some frustration with them. Psychology graduate students who mentor psychology undergraduate students identified barriers in their work (Bettencourt et al., 1994). These mentors reported being overworked, focusing too much time on managing their mentees, and not being able to fulfill other tasks as barriers when mentoring. Some of the psychology graduate students felt that balancing their own academic expectations and the duties associated with role of mentoring was at times frustrating. Bettencourt and associates noted in their findings, however, that the graduate students believed that the disadvantages of the experience were less impactful than the advantages, making the experience worthwhile.

Selecting Effective Mentors for Novice Teachers

Ample examples of standards, used by organizations or groups, to select mentors can be found in literature. However, confirmable data concerning effective standards for mentor selection are much less evident in current research. To further compound this issue, mentors are often selected by third parties, who may or may not be familiar with the needs of the mentee or mentor or, to make things worse, some mentors are selected solely because they are available (McCann & Johannessen, 2009). Mentors and mentees both labeled poor mentor-mentee matching as a barrier to the mentoring relationship (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Eby et al., 2010; Hobson et al., 2009; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009). Therefore, the proper identification and

selection of mentors is vital step in setting the stage for an effective mentoring relationship (Hellsten et al., 2007).

Considerations when selecting a mentor. Kilburg (2007) advocated for the following standards for selecting mentors, including “approachability, integrity, ability to listen, sincerity, willingness to share time, enthusiasm, teaching competence, trust, receptivity, positive attitude, openness, commitment to the profession, experience in teaching, tactfulness, cooperativeness, and flexibility” (p. 296). Mullinix (2002) wrote that the most significant quality when selecting a mentor is that they are well-known for being an effective classroom teacher. In addition, she added that eligible mentors should have the other characteristics, including: “a clearly articulated vision of teaching and learning, knowledge of content, accomplished curriculum developer, professional interests, expressed educational philosophies, and compatible personalities” (p. 2).

Besides considering personal and professional characteristics of mentors, Mullinix (2002) also suggested that the situation might dictate the particular mentor that should be selected. For example, if the mentee needs more assistance with content, then it would be important to select a mentor with a wide breadth and depth of knowledge. Similarly, if a mentee needs help with collegiality, then pairing them with a mentor who would be good at encouraging team collaboration would be beneficial (Mullinix, 2002). Polikoff, Desimone, Porter, and Hochberg (2015) proposed taking into account “mentor caseload, release time, and compensation” when selecting mentors (p. 82).

Mentor selection methods. Beyond considering the actual mentor characteristics or settings, mentor-mentee pairing must also determine the selection method. In their research on mentor selection, Bell and Treleaven (2011) determined that mentor relationships tended to be more effective when mentees are able to make their own mentor selections. They found that

mentees appreciated being able to select based upon prior interactions with mentors, allowing them to feel more connected to their mentors from the start of the relationship. Additionally, they discovered that if a mentee had an intermediary person assist them in selecting their mentor of choice, the process was smoother. While Bell and Treleaven determined mentee choice was a positive element, Metros and Yang (2006) warned against mentees selecting their own mentors. They noted that not being aware of the mentor's history or reputation in addition to their motives for accepting the role could be detrimental in a mentoring relationship.

No matter the method of selection, Kilburg (2007) warned against rushing the mentor-mentee selection process as a mismatch could result in a negative mentoring experience. While schools and districts would benefit from taking the time to make suitable matches between mentors and mentees, Hudson and Hudson (2010) recommend that universities and schools partner together to make thoughtful decisions about pairings with preservice teachers. A first-time mentor recalled her experience with mentor-mentee selection in the work edited by McCann and Johannessen (2009). She also highlighted the need to take time to select appropriate mentors. She pointed out that the pairing seems somewhat random when she stated that "administrators who are responsible for setting up placement of student teachers know nothing more than what a transcript can tell" about the student teacher even if they know the skills and personality of the directing teacher well (McCann & Johannessen, 2009).

Conclusions Drawn from the Literature Review

A review of the literature resulted in the discovery that there is a plethora of research that has demonstrated that mentoring is benefit to both the mentee and the mentor. Furthermore, it highlighted that there is a growing body of knowledge that demonstrates that graduate students who serve as mentors to undergraduates also experience benefits to participating in the

mentoring relationship. Although mentees and mentors, including graduate student mentors, experience many benefits, all groups face barriers concerning the mentoring process.

Furthermore, an examination of the research demonstrated that mentor teachers act as teacher-leaders and transformational leaders when acting as mentors.

While confirming that much work has been done in the area of mentoring and graduate students serving as mentors, researchers still encourage further investigation into the benefits and barriers for mentors when mentoring. More knowledge in this area could help to explain motivation and willingness to participate for mentors. Ghosh & Reio (2013) also suggest that knowing this information could assist university programs in the recruitment of students (both graduates and undergraduates). Similarly, further investigation into benefits and barriers could enlighten mentoring program structure and training so that mentors are the most prepared entering into the mentoring relationship (Ambrosetti, 2004). Reddick and associates (2012) also “call for further work examining mentoring relationships between graduate and undergraduate students across multiple contexts” (p. 38).

Besides adding to the current knowledge in mentoring, perceived benefits and barriers, and graduate students serving as mentors, more research is needed that examines the work of graduate students in education mentoring undergraduate preservice teachers. None of the literature reviewed explored this specific situation. Examining these types of mentoring situations to discover benefits and barriers and subsequently comparing that against Social Exchange's Theory of rationalizing the rewards verses cost of relationships would be informative to educational leaders. Knowledge in this area could be useful in practice for similar reasons noted above concerning recruitment and training, as well as in matching mentors and mentees.

Chapter Summary

This chapter was a collection of the findings from review on literature on the topic of mentoring. A definition of mentoring and descriptions of mentoring structures were shared. Benefits and barriers, as a result of mentoring relationship, for both mentees and mentors were presented. A discussion of mentor teachers as teacher-leaders and transformational leaders was also included. Research concerning graduate students serving as mentors was recounted. There was also a discussion on how effective mentors are selected. Gaps in the current knowledge were determined. Rationale for this current study was offered through this review of the literature and the methodology for how the investigation will be conducted will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

Qualitative research offers the researcher opportunities that cannot be afforded with quantitative research. A key element of qualitative research is that it takes places in the natural setting where the researcher can study the set of circumstances as they occur in an untouched reality. The researcher is not manipulating or directing the circumstances but watching and listening to the voice of those involved. Patton (2002) notes a benefit of the qualitative approach is that “the researcher has direct contact and gets close to the people, situation, and phenomenon under study” (Patton, 2002, p. 40). The research process is a personal experience for the researcher and their “insights are an important part of the inquiry and critical understanding of the phenomenon” (Patton, 2002, p. 40). The researcher is able to immerse themselves in the setting with the voice of those involved being central to the process. The researcher is the instrument through which the data is collected.

Further benefits of qualitative research include its inductive nature, depth of study, and purposive sampling. According to Roberts (2010), qualitative research allows the researcher to go more in depth when collecting data. Thick, rich descriptions are the result of time spent in the field in observation and in conversation with the individuals involved. Patton (2002) emphasizes another feature of qualitative research in that it frees the researcher from having predetermined ideas and instead keeps them open “to whatever emerges” (p. 40). The researcher can look for patterns in qualitative research because they are permitted to include whatever happens in the naturalistic environment. Both Roberts (2010) and Patton (2002) reminded that purposive sampling is another key feature of qualitative research. The participants selected to partake in a qualitative study are not random, but carefully selected based on inclusive criteria. In summary,

Patton (2002) offers a simple description of the qualitative research process by explaining that it “begins by exploring, then confirming, guided by analytical principles rather than rules; ends with a creative synthesis” (p. 41).

Rationale for Case Study Methodology

This study used a qualitative research design, specifically the case study approach. Merriam (1998) advocates that case studies have “proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating program, and for informing policy” (p. 41). The structure of the case study approach proved useful in answering the research questions for the educational concern set forth in this study.

Identifying a case. The case study approach revolves around the study of a case. Patton (2002) defines a case as “people who share a common experience or perspective” (p. 231). Merriam (1998), one of the most prominent methodologists for case studies, advocates that the most important element of the case study methodology is determining the actual case. She defines a case as “a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries” so that the researcher can “fence in” exactly what they want to investigate (p. 27). Creswell (2003) echoes the idea of boundaries for cases when noting that “cases are bound by time and activity” (p. 15). A case is further defined by Merriam (1998) when she explains that a case “could be a person such as a student, a teacher, a principal; a program; a group such as a class, a school, a community; a specific policy; and so on” (p. 27). Furthermore, she clarifies that if the entity cannot be kept within the stated boundaries then it is not a case and the case study approach is not appropriate. Silverman (2005) expresses that the unit to be studied “must be defined at the outset in order to clarify the research strategy” (p. 127).

Based on the definitions of cases above, this study was appropriately labeled as a case study. It focused on one single case, a group of graduate students at one university who also practice as PK-12 teachers. The research questions sought information from a bounded group of individuals. All of the participants in this study were graduate students in the COEHS at UNF. All were practicing PK-12 teachers or had practiced as teachers in recent years. Also, all of the participants met the qualifications to mentor preservice teachers and were mentoring, planning to mentor, or had mentored university students preparing to be teachers. A single unit of qualified individuals was studied and that aligned with the definitions of a case to make a case study a fitting approach.

The structure of a case study. Once case study was determined to be an appropriate methodology, the researcher had to decide upon whose slant to the methodology was most pertinent. Yazan (2015) studied the methodology in depth and found that while case study is a viable and commonly implemented qualitative methodology, “it still does not have a legitimate statue as a social science research strategy because it does not have well-defined and well-structured protocols” (p.134). He emphasized that this causes confusion for researchers attempting to follow this methodology. Yazan continued with declaring that there are three prominent methodologists for case studies and that researchers are that free to “choose to utilize the tools offered by one methodologist or construct an amalgam of tools from two or three of them” (p.135). The three researchers best known for case studies are Robert Yin, Sharan Merriam, and Robert Stake. After studying these three case study methodologists, the researcher decided the structure set by Sharan Merriam most closely aligned with her professionally and with the needs of this study.

Merriam's structure. According to Yazan (2015), Merriam sees case studies as having distinguishing characteristics to them that are not necessarily all present in other methodologies. Merriam labels those characteristics as “particularistic...descriptive...and heuristic” (Yazan, 2015, p. 139). The case study is particularistic because as noted already it focuses on one group, one event, one case. The case study method is descriptive because, like other qualitative approaches, “it yields a rich, thick description” (Yazan, 2015, p. 139). Finally, Merriam perceives the case study approach as heuristic because “it illuminates the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Yazan, 2015, p. 139). Merriam (1998) identifies the restrictions to the case study approach, but she stresses that positives offset the negatives. The strengths that she emphasizes include that case studies exist in naturalistic environments, focus on understanding, and produce a complete picture of the situation. This study had the same strengths that Merriam mentioned here as strengths of a case study. Interviews were conducted to capture the voice of the participants and to gain more understanding of their perspective. This study focused on a naturalistic environment, the work the participants did every day and not in a controlled or manipulated environment.

Additionally, Merriam (1998) believes that the case study method allows the reader to gain understanding and that “these insights can be constructed as tentative hypotheses that help structure future research” (p. 41). Future research leads to new knowledge which expands a field of study. Therefore, Merriam (1998) encourages that case studies can be good for expanding the field of education. She writes that “Educational processes, problems, and programs can be examined to bring an understanding that in turn can affect and perhaps even improve practice” and that “case study has proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating programs, and for informing policy” (p. 41). This study has the potential to impact

educational programming and processes, therefore, it was appropriately categorized as a case study. The study sought to gain a holistic picture of the current process, the mentoring process, to determine if different practices needed to be put in place.

Yazan (2015) articulated that Merriam's style of a case study is a methodical way of conducting qualitative research. Her steps include "conducting literature review, constructing a theoretical framework, identifying a research problem, crafting and sharpening research questions, and selecting the sample" (Yazan, 2015, p. 141). This study developed in a similar manner to the one outlined here by Merriam. A literature review was the first step, which included identifying a theoretical framework (Social Exchange Theory). The researcher followed up this step with defining the research questions and determining the correct sample. Merriam's case study structure and the case study method in general were appropriate for this study because of the similar methods in which this study was built.

Merriam also believes that data analysis is where the qualitative researcher analyzes the data and creates meaning of what has been observed, heard, read, or collected. Yazan (2015) states that qualitative researchers are most excited when they "make sense of their world and their experiences in the world" (p. 137) and that case study research under Merriam's approach allows a qualitative researcher this opportunity. Similar to the rationale already offered, this study fittingly matches with the case study approach because seeking understanding and making sense of a current educational process was a fundamental element of this study.

Research Questions

Creswell (2003) advises that researchers set one or a few principal research questions and then add sub questions as necessary. He further suggests that the research questions be open-

ended and uses “non-directional language” (p.106). The research questions for this study were developed in alignment with Creswell’s suggestions. The research questions are included below.

What do graduate students perceive as the benefits to mentoring preservice teachers?

What do graduate students perceive as the barriers to mentoring preservice teachers?

How do experiences as a graduate student influence the decision to engage in the leadership activity of serving as a mentor (Directing Teacher) to preservice teachers?

Sample

Participants for this study were selected through purposive sampling, which is a prevalent and appropriate form of sampling for qualitative studies (Merriam, 1998). Purposive sampling was suitable for this study because it limited participants to individuals that met the specific parameters of the case being studied (Creswell, 2013; Silverman, 2005). Not all individuals that meet the parameters of the study elected to participate in the study, but all participants did meet the criteria set for the case. According to Merriam (1998), a typical sample “reflects the average person, situation, or instance or the phenomenon of interest” (p.62). Participants who met the specific criteria of the case was chosen as the typical sample. In addition to typical sampling, snowball sampling was used as a means to attain participants. Snowball sampling allowed participants to recommend others as potential participants (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 1998). Participants suggested through snowball sampling were invited to take part in this study if they too represented the typical of the case.

Sample size. Patton (2002) advised that the “sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what’s at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources” (p.244). Based on Patton’s suggestion, the appropriate number of participants for this case study was determined to be ten participants.

If ten participants did not yield an adequate amount of data, then more participants would be added until that point was reached.

Recruitment of participants. Potential participants were recruited in multiple ways. One approach was to email a flyer (Appendix A) to all graduate students within the UNF COEHS. This action was done subsequent to obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and by following university guidelines for contacting students via email. Another tactic was to visit graduate classes in the COEHS and speak to the graduate students about this study in order to create interest and answer questions in a face-to-face approach. Additionally, the researcher asked participants for recommendations of peers who fit the parameters of the case that may also be interested in participating in this study.

Inclusion criteria. Participants in this study had to be English speaking and at least 18 years of age. They had to be UNF COEHS graduate students (masters or doctoral level) who were currently enrolled or who had graduated within the last year from a UNF COEHS graduate program. The participants also had to be practicing PK-12 teachers or were individuals who had taught in a PK-12 setting within the last three years. Participants could have mentored a preservice teacher in some capacity in their career or they could have had the potential to mentor by meeting the requirements to be a directing teacher.

The above criteria had to be in place for participants to be a part of this study. A specific group of individuals was to be examined for this case. This inclusion criteria were appropriate because if the participants were not graduate students in the UNF COEHS and were not also practicing teachers with the potential to serve as mentors to preservice teachers, then the data would not represent the voice of the particular case being studied.

Exclusion criteria. Participants will be excluded from this study if they are not English speakers or if they are not 18 years or older. Participants will also be excluded from this study for the following reasons: not a current UNF COEHS graduate student (masters or doctoral level) or have graduated from a UNF COEHS graduate program within the last year, not a PK-12 teacher or have not practiced as a PK-12 teacher within the last three years. The exclusion criteria were appropriate in that participants not currently serving as teachers and/or not currently, or recently, in a UNF COEHS graduate program would not match the profile of the case to be studied. Additionally, the recency of participation in a graduate program and current role as a PK-12 teacher were key to this study in that the researcher was interested in the direct impact that a graduate program had on the perspectives of a practicing mentor teacher.

Interview Questions

Data were collected from the participants via face to face interviews, one participant at a time, using semi-structured questioning. Creswell (2003) offers many advantages to interviewing as a means of data collection. He emphasizes that “participants can provide historical information” and interviewing gives the researcher the opportunity to regulate the conversation by deciding upon what questions to ask (Creswell, 2003, p. 186). Additionally, Creswell (2003) suggests that researchers use a small amount of open-ended questions, when interviewing, to gain the greatest information from participants. This idea is supported by Patton (2002) who proposes that “open-ended responses permit one to understand the world as seen by the respondents” (p. 21). He further advises that open-ended questions allow the participants to share information that may not have been shared if participants were only allowed to respond with preselected responses on a survey.

In accordance to the recommendations of Marshall and Rossman (2011) and Patton (2002), the interviews for this study were scheduled in advance with the participants and questions were prepared prior to the interview. The questions were not shared with participants ahead of time, which Marshall and Rossman (2011) state can be an option but is not a requirement when interviewing in qualitative research. The interview questions were constructed in an intentional manner, both in question time and order. The researcher followed the ideas of Patton (2002) when formulating questions. Patton proposes that interview questions be a combination of demographic, experiential, opinion, and feeling questions. He suggests that questions be sequenced with the factual questions first and to begin with recalling the experience before delving into perspective type questions. The interview questions ended with another idea from Patton. He recommends that interviews conclude with the last word from the participant. Patton suggests a final question such as “Anything you care to add?” or “What should I have asked you that I didn’t think to ask?” (Patton, 2002, p. 379). The semi-structured interview protocol that was used during face to face interviews in this study are included in Appendix B.

Creswell (2003) acknowledges that interviewing has its limitations, such as interviewees determining what information will be shared information coupled with the fact that interviews often are not conducted in the field. Furthermore, Creswell points out that the presence of the researcher can negatively impact what data is collected. Similarly, Rubin and Rubin (2005) write that “the researcher has to be cautious not to impose his or her views on the interviewee” (p. 37). In an effort to keep adverse influences to a minimum, the researcher sought to listen, reflect regularly, encourage conversation, and remain honest about her biases and experiences. In addition, the interviewer asked one question at a time and utilized probing and follow up questions as necessary (Patton, 2002).

Demographic Data

Basic demographic data were collected on the participants after they signed informed consent (Appendix C), just prior to the interview session. Participants completed a demographic questionnaire to offer information such as gender, age, ethnicity, teaching experience, and graduate program of study. A sample of the demographic questionnaire given to participants is included in Appendix D. Information such as gender, ethnicity, and program of study were helpful in determining if the sample was reflective of the entire case. Age and teaching experience were used to decide if there was any alignment between maturity and experience as a mentor. Information on teaching experience and graduate program of study were also used to see if there was a connection between teaching experience and/or degree concentration with experience as a mentor. Previous studies on mentoring preservice teachers has included such demographic data as gender, age, and teaching experience, but not graduate program enrollment information. Studies done on graduate students as mentors has included programs of study, but not specific information on teaching experience. This study sought to include all of these elements in the demographic data to examine how each may impact the experiences of the mentors.

Data Collection and Recording

The data collection process for this case study began after approval was received from the university IRB.

Data sources. Data were collected mainly through in-depth, one-on-one interviews. The interviews were conducted using semi-structured questions that were open-ended in order to capture the perspective of the participant (Creswell, 2013, Marshall & Rossman, 2011, Merriam, 1998, Patton, 2002). The researcher scheduled the interviews at times that were convenient for

the participants. The interview questions were semi-structured and planned prior to the interview session (Creswell, 2002). The interviews were conducted on UNF's campus, which was away from the setting in which the participants were teaching and/or mentoring. It was decided that the interviews would take place at UNF since this a naturalistic environment for the participants in terms of their graduate student status. Furthermore, prior to the start of the questioning sequence, the interview participants signed informed consent and completed the demographic questionnaire. The researcher continued to interview new participants until no new data were presented (Merriam, 1998).

In addition to using semi-structured interviews, data were collected via field notes recorded by the researcher. The researcher took "strategic and focused notes" during interview sessions (Patton, 2002, p. 383). While the interviews were not conducted in the field, the researcher followed advice that field notes include "demographic information about the time, place, and date" and placed that information on the notes that were taken (Creswell, 2003, p. 189). The field notes also encompassed the researcher's thoughts, ideas, and questions during the interviews.

Recording and managing data. Each semi-structured interview was audio recorded, while field notes were recorded for added information. Audio was recorded using two different devices to protect against technical issues (Patton, 2002). The audio recordings were kept on the researcher's external hard drive. After each interview session, a transcription was created from the recording in order to prepare the data for analysis. The interview transcriptions, demographic questionnaires, and field notes were kept together. All data sources were free from participant names. The data were marked with a code developed by the researcher in order to keep identifiers of the participants as private as possible (Creswell, 2003). The key to the code

with participants' names was kept separately from the interview transcriptions, demographic questionnaires, and field notes. All participants were assured that a pseudonym would be assigned to them in the publications of these findings to again attempt to keep information confidential (Creswell, 2003). All audio recordings were destroyed after transcripts were verified with the interviewees which was approximately two months after the interview was conducted.

Data Analysis

As soon as the first interview was concluded and a transcript was created, the data analysis process for this study began. At that point, data collection and analysis happened concurrently until the last interview was conducted and no new information was presented (Merriam, 1998).

Data analysis method. This main data analysis method chosen for this case study was the constant comparative analysis. This method was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 for the purpose of grounded theory (Merriam, 1998). While first developed for grounded theory, the constant comparative method has become an acceptable method for data analysis in case studies. The constant comparative method continually compares new data with data previously collected and analyzed as well as against the literature and theoretical frameworks studied (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 1998; Yazan, 2015). This comparison of pieces of data allow the researcher to decide upon categories of information and themes are established (Merriam, 1998).

The data analysis process began with the researcher reading the interview transcripts and field notes multiple times. While reading, the researcher recorded personal thoughts and reactions in addition to recognizing potential categories (Merriam, 1998). Then, time was spent

in reflection and as Merriam (1998) advises, the researcher noted things to “ask, observe, or look for” in future interview sessions (p. 161). Next, notes were reviewed and possible categories were determined.

After each additional interview, a similar process was followed. The transcripts were read, notes were made, and tentative categories were formed. Beginning after the second interview, once each interview transcript and notes were individually analyzed, new ideas were compared with ideas from prior interviews. Categories were continually compared to determine if new information or differences were observed with each subsequent interview (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Furthermore, the categories were continually compared to the literature on graduate students as mentors and perceptions of mentor teacher to see if there were differences or similarities (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). If discrepancies appeared, then the researcher determined how to adjust current categories to include the new information.

In the data analysis process, categories were constructed by comparing single units of data with one another. The researcher looked “for recurring regularities in the data” and sorted the data into groups that made sense (Merriam, 1998, p. 179). Names were assigned to these groups to represent the data within. The names were decided by the researcher based upon the information in each group (Merriam, 1998). These groups became the categories in the data analysis process. The number of categories was determined in part by assuring that all of the data fit within a given category and only one category. Additionally, the researcher took the recommendation of Merriam (1998) and decided upon a number of categories with the ability of the reader to process the number of categories in mind. The final categories of the analysis became the themes, meaning was made from the data, and the research questions were answered (Creswell, 2003; Creswell, 2013).

Utilizing the constant comparative method also allowed the researcher to know if and what new data needed to be collected (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 1998). Data were collected and fundamental analysis was done, while new interviews were being conducted, until no new information was presented (Merriam, 1998). The constant comparative method afforded the researcher the opportunity to analyze data concurrently with data collection. After the final interview was conducted, a final analysis only needed to be made instead of beginning the process at this point (Merriam, 1998).

Rationale for analysis technique. As mentioned earlier, Yazan (2015) noted that researchers utilizing the case study methodology are free to select an approach to case studies that meet their needs since there is still debate over one set structure. Of the three main case study methodologists, Merriam, Yin, and Stake, the researcher most closely aligns with the structure set forth by Merriam. Merriam supports the constant comparative method and therefore, this approach made sense for an analysis technique. The researcher appreciated the ability to begin data analysis from the beginning of the data collection process and to be able to constantly compare new information gained. Data collection was more refined as the process continued. Moreover, the constant comparison also permitted more time being spent on the actual analysis as it was done over an extended period of time. Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggest that “we can never know everything and that there is never one complete truth” but the researcher felt that the constant comparative method gave the opportunity for the best interpretations of the data to be made in this case study (p. 220).

Additional data analysis technique. Merriam (1998) acknowledges that there are three levels of data analysis, including: description of data, classifying data, and generating models or theories. She emphasizes that all three levels do not need to be completed in data analysis, but

that the levels should be done in sequential order if more than one level is completed. Since the constant comparative method classifies data, a descriptive level of data analysis was also completed in this study. Patton (2002) cautioned researchers from being too quick to interpret information and to carefully begin with thick, rich descriptions.

Ethical Considerations

In terms of ethics, Merriam (1998) states that “the best a researcher can do is to be conscious to examine the ethical issues that pervade the research process and to examine his or her own philosophical orientation vis-à-vis these issues” (p. 219). The researcher aimed to be transparent and make ethically sound decisions throughout the research process, starting with gaining approval from the university IRB in order to protect participants and limit possible risks.

Ethical decisions concerning participant selection. This study examined the perspectives of PK-12 teachers serving as mentors to preservice teachers. All of the participants were over the age of 18 and were not considered to be part of a vulnerable population (Creswell, 2003). The participants were all volunteers and were able to leave the study at any point if they wished. While the risk was minimal, the participants were told about potential harm that could occur from participating in an interview (Patton, 2002). Participants told about steps that were being taken to protect their identity during data collection to keep their information confidential (Creswell, 2003). Furthermore, before data were collected, informed consent was explained to the participants and all participants voluntarily signed informed consent prior to partaking in the study (Creswell, 2003). Participants were made aware that they could leave the study at any point and that their data would not be included in the final analysis if they chose to leave. Also, participants were informed that if they chose not to participate, there would be no negative affect on their graduate coursework or their ability to host a preservice teacher in the future.

Ethical decisions concerning data collection and analysis. Attempts were made throughout the study to keep the identity of the participants confidential. As noted earlier, interview recordings, transcripts, field notes, and demographic information were all kept without participant names attached. The researcher created a code to be able to identify participant information without labeling the data with their names. A master list with a key to the code was kept separately from the data itself. Participants were assigned pseudonyms for the publication of the findings so that they cannot be identified by the reader. All data were kept electronically using software that was password protected. Physical copies of the data were kept in a locked cabinet. Identifiable data were not shared with anyone outside of the researcher's team. Copies of the data (both electronic and physical) were made to prevent misfortune. The copies were kept in similar secure locations as the originals (Patton, 2002).

Ethical decisions concerning the researcher. In her two decades in the field of education, the researcher has been a mentor teacher to multiple preservice teachers, as well as a mentor to peer teachers beginning their careers. The researcher held positions mentoring novice teachers and supporting mentors while working for the district professional development office. Additionally, the researcher held a position at UNF teaching preservice teachers, supervising preservice teachers, and making placements for field experiences and internships. At the time of this study, the researcher worked as an academic coach at a K-8 school and did not work directly with any of the participants in the study. At no time during this study was the researcher serving in a supervisory role (job and/or graduate school related) to any of the participants, so the opportunity for coercion was at a minimum. The participants in this study were not compensated by the researcher and no personal participant records were accessed.

The researcher disclosed her potential relationship with any participants prior to gaining informed consent and collecting data. The researcher was not funded or otherwise supported by a group with a motive to complete this particular study. Furthermore, the researcher completed the Collaborative Institutional Training initiative (CITI) models and refrained from collecting data until IRB approval was received. A copy of the IRB approval is included in Appendix D. More examination of the researcher's perspectives is discussed later in this chapter.

Research Rigor and Trustworthiness

Rigor and trustworthiness are accounted for differently in qualitative research than they are in quantitative research. Merriam (1998) explains that in quantitative research, trustworthiness and rigor are found in the validity and reliability of elements of the study prior to its beginning. She clarified that in qualitative research, rigor “derives from the researcher’s presence, the nature of the interaction between researcher and participants, triangulation of data, the interpretation of perceptions, and rich, thick description” (Merriam, 1998, p. 151). Qualitative research that is completed honestly and ethically affords the validity and reliability that is desired (Merriam, 1998). However, to satisfy the need for validity, generalizability, reliability, and objectivity, Lincoln and Guba (2000) created alternate constructs that make sense to demonstrate rigor and trustworthiness in qualitative studies. These constructs include: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility. The credibility of a study rests on its ability for the reader to find the information presented as believable and true. The reader must have faith that the findings are consistent with reality (Merriam, 1998). Credibility is also evident when there is a “heartfelt desire to learn from the inquiry rather than to promote oneself or one’s pet theories” (Piantanida & Garman, 1999, p. 147). According to Patton (2002), the credibility of qualitative research is

dependent upon the following: “rigorous methods...the credibility of the researcher...and philosophical belief in the value of qualitative inquiry” (p. 552). Throughout the research process, the researcher sought to be transparent and thorough in order to be viewed as credible to the reader. The data collection and analyses, as explained, were conducted ethically and produced high-quality data that was methodically examined (Patton, 2002). The researcher values the naturalistic nature of qualitative inquiry and she genuinely entered into this qualitative inquiry to investigate mentor perspectives as a means to adding knowledge to her field of practice.

Strategies to establish credibility. Researchers can employ other specific strategies to add credibility to a qualitative study including: triangulation, member checking, rich, thick descriptions, and acknowledging researcher biases (Creswell, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 1998). Triangulation is incorporated into the qualitative inquiry when the researcher utilizes more than one data source and compares the data to determine if the information can be corroborated (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 252). The researcher collected data through semi-structured interviews. The participants were asked to participate in a second interview as a way to member check and to offer additional information.

The second interviews, the member checks, were another way to triangulate data and establish credibility (Creswell, 2003). Member checking requires the researcher to involve the voice of the participant a second time in the research process. Typically, the researcher will recap the data collected and the inferences made through analysis. Then, the participants will verify if the summaries are an accurate account of the information. Marshall & Rossman (2011) suggest that when member checking, the researcher has the opportunity to “ask for reactions, corrections, and further insights” from the participants (p. 221). The researcher conducted

member checks with participants to add credibility to the investigative process and resulting findings. Additionally, rich, thick descriptions were included in this study in order to “transport readers to the setting and give the discussion an element of shared experiences” (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). The researcher sought to add credibility by offering the reader the opportunity to feel part of the study through detailed descriptions.

The credibility of the researcher. Since the researcher is the main tool in qualitative research, it is important to explain the credibility of the researcher as a means of obtaining trustworthiness in a study. The researcher must be straightforward about her prior knowledge, expertise in the area of study, personal connections, and anything else that may affect the investigation, whether it be positive or negative (Creswell, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 2002).

The researcher has been in the field of education for nearly 20 years in the community in which the investigation took place. Job experience includes 12 years as a classroom teacher, two years as an academic coach, two years as a professional development presenter and district mentor, and five years as a university instructor and intern supervisor. In these roles, the researcher has mentored countless preservice teachers, novice teachers, peer teachers, and mentor teachers. The researcher has worked as liaison at both the school level and university level for the placement of preservice teachers in classrooms, matching them to mentor teachers in the field. While no experience is ever entirely positive, the researcher has enjoyed mentoring and coaching and continually worked with preservice teachers because she believed she had wisdom to offer. Additionally, the researcher continued mentoring preservice teachers because she felt she too gained from the relationship.

At the time of the study, the researcher was in a limited position of influence in terms of preservice teachers. She worked at a K-8 where she served both as an academic coach and the professional development facilitator. The researcher was not eligible to host a preservice teacher and with few qualified mentor teachers at her school, her role as professional development facilitator did not afford much opportunity for her to help arrange for the placement of preservice teachers at her school. At the time of the data collection and analysis, she was no longer working with the UNF, matching preservice teachers with mentor teachers. The researcher was a doctoral student in the COEHS at UNF conducting research as part of her degree requirements. While the researcher had contacts with former coworkers at the university, access to the field was granted no different than the average student. She gained access to the sample population through university personnel and communication systems, after obtaining the standard requirements from the university. The researcher was not supervising any participants in the study. Necessary approval for the study was granted by the IRB at UNF.

The researcher served as the principal instrument in this case study and was a novice investigator in this study. Her prior research experience was limited to assignments for coursework in undergraduate and graduate programs. Interviewing experience was also limited to class assignments, prior to conducting pilot interviews with the interview questions for this study. Likewise, having had good experiences serving as a mentor teacher to preservice teachers, the researcher realizes the prejudices and inadequacies that she brings to the data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes.

As has been noted already, attempts were made by the researcher to conduct ethical research that was also rigorous and trustworthy. She has been upfront about her experiences, relationships, shortcomings, and biases in order to build credibility with the reader (Piantanida &

Garman, 1999). Furthermore, the researcher has spent time in reflection throughout the process as a means of strengthening herself as an instrument in qualitative research (Piantanida & Garman, 1999). Also, the researcher acknowledges that interviews do not happen between machines, but individuals with ideas and emotions. The researcher endeavored to develop a personal interviewing style that matched her personality and accepted her prejudices without negatively impacting the contribution of the participant (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Transferability. Trustworthiness can also be attained in qualitative studies through a study's ability to transfer the knowledge from one context to another. The paradox with this concept is, however, that transferability is somewhat of an oxymoron in qualitative research. Qualitative inquiry occurs in a naturalistic environment, the real world, and the real world is an everchanging being (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Despite this truth, qualitative researchers can take steps to strengthen the level of transferability in qualitative research. One way that researchers can assist their study in being more transferable is to compare their findings with their original theoretical framework (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In this study, the theoretical framework that guided the inquiry was Social Exchange Theory. The researcher took the findings of this study and related them back to the fundamentals of the Social Exchange Theory to determine if the new findings were on target or not with previous studies.

Likewise, researchers can enhance the level of transferability by incorporating rich, thick descriptions in their study. When the researcher has provided detailed descriptions, the reader is better suited to decide if the study at hand is similar enough to their situation to make the findings transferable or not (Merriam, 1998). The researcher included rich, thick descriptions of the sample, the data collected, and the analysis in hopes that the reader could find transferability

in the study. However, it is the reader that must make the ultimate decision if a study is transferable to another situation.

Dependability. Qualitative research studies are deemed dependable if they have a high probability of being replicated by another researcher. In a naturalistic environment, this is likely impossible, but researchers can strengthen the level of dependability of a study by being transparent with the reader the steps that were taken throughout the investigative process. Merriam (1998) emphasizes that qualitative inquiry is not done in remote, controlled settings, but that the researcher can demonstrate dependability when they “describe and explain the world as those in the world experience it” (p. 205). The researcher offered in-depth descriptions of the steps taken throughout this investigation. The selection of the sample, the methodology, the data analysis process has all been recounted. These steps were taken in order to demonstrate that the findings of the study were reliable and how the study might be replicated.

Confirmability. Confirmability in qualitative research is most closely aligned with objectivity in quantitative research. In qualitative inquiry, the researcher must demonstrate someone else could confirm their findings, whether that be the reader or a critical friend. Marshall & Rossman (2011) advocate three steps that a researcher can take to establish confirmability. These steps are: acknowledging that qualitative studies cannot truly be replicated, keeping a log of each decision made and the rationale, and retaining the data in an organized manner so that it could be reviewed by another. In qualitative research, the research specifically does not seek to control the environment and because the natural world experiences constant change, replicating a study is not truly realistic. The researcher realizes that with every passing moment, the perspective of the participants could shift. Another experience with a preservice teacher could modify their feelings toward the process, both positively or negatively.

However, the researcher took detailed notes of the data analysis process, an audit trail, and has kept the data ordered if another wanted to evaluate the methodology independently to test the confirmability of this study.

Challenges of Case Study

As with each methodology, there are limitations to the case study method of research. The challenges that case studies possess include limitations around politics and funding, prejudices of the researcher, sample size, lack of honesty, and other concerns with trustworthiness and rigor (Merriam, 1998; Roberts, 2010). Politics and the funding of a study are examples of challenges presented in case studies. If a study is financially supported by a group with a motive, the reader could question the legitimacy of the findings. To help with this limitation, the researcher must be upfront about this information so that the reader is clear of sponsorships when comprehending the findings.

Another challenge that a case study faces is with sample size. A case study can investigate one case or multiple cases. If a case is one entity, the study could be investigating anything from one individual, situation, or program to several entities across multiple cases. In any situation, the sample size is still typically small and that leads to a concern with generalizability with a narrowly confined set of data. Silverman (2005) raises questions asking if a researcher can really know if a sample size is truly representative of the entire sample. He points out that oftentimes samples are chosen because they are easily accessible and not chosen randomly. Qualitative researchers may not be able to guarantee their samples are representative of the whole, but they can take measure to try to make that happen. One way researchers could possibly avoid this limitation is by trying to match the demographics of the sample population to that of the sample population.

As well, the researcher as the primary instrument in the data collection and analysis also presents a challenge in case study methodology. This is a challenge that is prevalent in qualitative research in general. Merriam (1998) cautions that researchers may not be properly trained in data collection and analysis techniques and that this can skew the results. She expresses that if the reader does not find the researcher credible, then there are issues with the dependability and transferability of the findings. Roberts (2010) emphasizes that all methodologies have challenges and that the key is to be honest and forthright about them so that the reader “can determine for themselves the degree to which the limitations seriously affect the study” (p. 162).

Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the methodological approach this qualitative investigation on the perspectives of graduate students who serve as mentors to preservice teachers. The qualitative method of case study was defined and the boundaries of the case for this particular study was identified. The debate about the structure of case studies was acknowledged along with the three prominent methodologists (Yin, Merriam, and Stake). A rationale was offered as to why the researcher chose to follow the structure for case studies that was put forth by Merriam. The three main research questions for this study into the graduate students serving as mentors to preservice teachers were presented as well as details about the sample and the interview questions. Data collection techniques were shared and the decision to utilize the constant comparative method of data analysis was shared. Finally, ethical considerations were addressed as well as ways the researcher attempted to establish rigor and trustworthiness. The researcher has been honest and forthcoming, disclosing personal biases and experiences, all in an effect to gain the confidence of the reader for the presentation of the findings.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Results

Introduction

The purpose of this case study was to discover benefits and barriers to mentoring preservice teachers as perceived PK-12 teachers who are also graduate students in the field of education. This study also sought to examine the motivation of the teachers to engage in the mentorship of preservice teachers. Approval for this study was granted by the IRB at UNF (Appendix D). In this chapter, the research questions and analysis procedures are reviewed and a timeline for data collection is offered. Descriptions of the composite sample as well as details about individual participants are also included. Furthermore, emerging themes are introduced, explained, and connected to the exemplar participant responses.

Research questions. The questions that guided this study were as follows: What do graduate students perceive as the benefits to mentoring preservice teachers? What do graduate students perceive as the barriers to mentoring preservice teachers? How do experiences as a graduate student influence the decision to engage in the leadership activity of serving as a mentor (Directing Teacher) to preservice teachers?

Review of data analysis technique and rationale. As noted in Chapter 3, the data analysis technique that was selected for this study was constant comparative analysis as first developed for ground theory by Glaser and Strauss (Merriam, 1998). Additionally, this technique was chosen because it aligns with the structure supported by Merriam, the case study methodologist with whom the researcher has most aligned herself. With the constant comparative analysis technique, the interviews were transcribed immediately and data analysis began as soon as the first interview was conducted (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 1998; Yazan, 20015).

Once the first interview was transcribed, the data were reviewed multiple times. Notes were taken based on initial thoughts and preliminary categories were determined (Merriam, 1998). The researcher took time to reflect upon the data gained, and future interviews were adjusted based on reflections (Merriam, 1998). The same analysis process was conducted after each subsequent interview. The categories were adjusted when as new data presented new ideas (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). After the last interview was completed, final analysis was conducted and themes were created based on the categories that were in place (Merriam, 1998).

This data analysis technique was appropriate for this case study. This technique allowed the researcher to analyze data and subsequently conduct more interviews. If there were concerns or different types of data were needed, the researcher could make changes in future interviews. For example, in Willow's interview, she was asked questions about the perceived benefits and barriers for mentors. Her answers at first were about the perceived benefits and barriers for mentees. The researcher had to clarify this a few times for Willow, so in future interviews, the researcher made it clear from the start of the interview that the answers should focus on the perceptions of the mentor. Furthermore, the extended time in data analysis allowed for more time to be spent in the analysis process and for the categories to be continually modified to incorporate all that was shared by the participants, including unexpected data. Additionally, in an attempt to member check the data, participants were given the opportunity to speak a second time with the researcher to review the early categories, be asked additional questions if needed, and add more thoughts to the record. Using the comparative analysis technique, the researcher was confident that the themes determined merge the thoughts of the participants.

Time frame of study. Participants were recruited from UNF's COEHS through approved face-to-face and email contact. Data collection, in the form of interviews, began in

October 2018 and continued until December 2018. Transcripts were created after the interviews were completed and analysis was begun immediately. The data analysis began after the first interview was completed in October 2018. Data analysis continued simultaneously with the continued interview process. Final data analysis was completed in January 2019.

Sample of Participants

The participants for this study were obtained through purposive sampling. This method was utilized in order to streamline the process of locating participants that only meet the criteria of the bounded case (Merriam, 1998). Participants were recruited via face-to-face visits to graduate classes in the UNF COEHS or email contact by university personnel. The researcher sought to acquire a sample that not only met the minimum criteria of the bounded case, but also one that represented the diversity within these criteria.

Composite demographics of participants. There was a total of seven participants in this single case study. All seven of the participants met the inclusion criteria, as discussed in this section. Every participant was a current graduate students or recent graduates (within one year) from master's or doctoral programs in the UNF COEHS. Five of the participants were working on their master's degrees and two were in the doctoral program. Five of the participants were seeking degrees in educational leadership while two were part of the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) program. Three of the participants reported having completed 25% or less of their graduate programs with three participants stating that they had completed at least 75% of their graduate programs. One participant responded that he had completed between 25% and 50% of their graduate program. All seven of the participants were teachers in PK-12 settings, with representatives from both elementary and secondary settings. Foreign language and ESE teachers were represented in addition to general education teachers. The participants had taught

a variety of subject areas, ranging from all subjects in elementary school to foreign language, math, and science in secondary settings. All of the participants spoke English during the interviews.

Six of these participants were female and only one was male. Four of the participants identified themselves as White and three of the participants identified themselves as African American. Four of the participants were between the ages of 25 and 34. The other three participants represented one person from each of the following three age ranges: 35-44, 45-54, and 55-64. The years of teaching experience ranged from four years to 25 years. The mean number of years was nine, the mode was six, and only one participant had over 10 years of teaching experience. Only three of the participants had completed Clinical Educator Training (CET), the state required training to host most university students. Five of the participants noted that they had mentored in some capacity in their career, with one of those five having mentored novice peers while the other four mentored preservice teachers. Two of the participants stated that they had not yet had the chance to mentor preservice teachers.

The seven participants in this study all fit within the parameters that bound this case study. They represented a small portion of individuals that fall within a wider case. The participants in this study were all graduate students in the COEHS at UNF. UNF is one of the many public universities in the state of Florida. The graduate programs in the COEHS represent a few of the educational graduate programs that are offered in other public universities within the state of Florida.

Individual descriptions of participants. In order to give a clearer picture of the individual participants within this study, it is important to offer a detailed description of each participant. Information on each participant has been included in this section as well as in table

format (Appendix F). In an attempt to protect their privacy, each participant was given a pseudonym. The pseudonyms were selected or confirmed by the participants. The specific pseudonyms came from popular fictional characters that embodied the spirit of the participants.

Jessie. Jessie was a White female between the ages of 25 and 34. She had been teaching for four years as a high school foreign language teacher. Jessie was in her first semester of the doctoral program in educational leadership. She had completed her master's program in education just two semesters prior. Jessie had not completed the state required CET to officially host an intern and had not served as a mentor to a preservice teacher in any capacity.

Cindy. Cindy was a White female between the ages of 25 and 34. She had been teaching for seven years. She had experience teaching all subjects in grades kindergarten, third grade, and fourth grade. She was in her first semester of her master's program in educational leadership. Cindy had completed the state required CET and had officially hosted and intern as well as preservice teachers in other capacities.

Willow. Willow was an African American female between the ages of 45 and 54. She had been teaching for 10 years and worked in school settings as a teacher assistant (para) for nine years prior to becoming a teacher. Willow taught kindergarten through second grade students receiving exceptional student education (ESE) services in a self-contained setting. She recently completed her master's program in ABA. Willow had completed the state required CET, but had not yet officially hosted any preservice teachers.

Jasmine. Jasmine was an African American female between the ages of 25 and 34. She had been teaching for five years, focusing on math and science in second to fourth grade. Jasmine had completed at least 75% of her master's program in educational leadership. She had

completed the state required CET and had officially hosted eight preservice teachers from a variety of capacities.

Meg. Meg was a White female between the ages of 25 and 34. She had been teaching for seven years. She had teaching experience in all subjects in kindergarten and first grade. Meg had completed at least 75% of her master's program in ABA. She had not taken the required CET, but had hosted two preservice teachers.

Eugene. Eugene was an African American male between the ages of 35 and 44. He had been teaching for five years. Eugene's experience ranged from elementary to middle school to high school. He taught math and science across these various grade levels. Eugene was in his second year of his doctoral program in educational leadership. He had not had the state required CET and had not mentored preservice teachers in any capacity. Eugene had, however, mentored peer teachers that were just beginning their careers.

Angela. Angela was a White female between the ages of 55 and 64. She had 25 years of teaching experience, working with children ages 3-6 in Montessori settings. Angela had completed less than 25% of her master's program in early childhood educational leadership. She had not had the state required CET but had mentored several preservice teachers learning the Montessori model.

Discussion about participants. During the interview process, the participants offered insight into some of their current situations concerning graduate school and mentoring. This additional information is included here to further enlighten the reader as to the thoughts and perceptions of the participants.

At the start of the interviews, the participants were asked (a) why they decided to enter graduate school, (b) their particular program of study, and (c) about their future career plans.

Jessie shared that she was encouraged to continue her studies based on an assignment in her master's program and now desires to be a consultant on school climate and culture. She also noted that it was a wise move to go into a doctoral program, straight from a master's program because she was still young and unattached. Cindy was inspired to enroll in her graduate program after being afforded leadership opportunities at her job. She also read a text on transformational leadership. From both influences, she decided she wanted to grow her leadership skills and become a principal or work with curriculum in order to affect a larger population. Willow was frustrated with her current school district and enrolled in order to have a backup plan just in case. Jasmine noted that she has a passion for professional development and that earning a master's degree could open up opportunities for her to work as a curriculum specialist, at the college level, or as a principal. Meg's motivation came from a desire to want to be best prepared for the needs of her students. Eugene articulated that his personal mentor had completed a doctorate degree and so with that influence, he felt inspired to fulfill a lifelong dream that he believed will give him more credibility moving forward professionally. Angela desires to have even more of a leadership role in the Montessori setting and believed that a master's degree will provide more knowledge as well as opportunity.

Additionally, the participants offered lessons learned from being in graduate school. Three participants commented that being in graduate school assisted them in looking beyond themselves. Jasmine noted that graduate school helped her focus more on the needs of the students and less on the needs of the teacher. Similarly, Eugene and Jessie voiced that graduate school gave them different perspectives and lenses in which to view situations. Eugene further noted that being in a doctoral program allowed him to empathize with his mentees because he felt like a mentee as a graduate student. Time management and organizational skills were

takeaways from Meg's time in graduate school. Increasing in leadership skills and being able to use that new knowledge immediately was shared by both Eugene and Angela. Interestingly, Jasmine held that graduate school has taught her how to find answers to questions on her own while Eugene said that it has caused him to learn how to ask for help. Angela pointed out that she is now focused on finding answers in current research instead of resorting to old ideas when needing to make decisions. Eugene commented that his graduate program has given him tools and resources to use when mentoring, while Willow argued that graduate programs need more hands-on experiences instead relying on textbook learning.

Moving from discussing graduate school to mentoring in the interview, two participants reported that they had not yet the opportunity to mentor preservice teachers in their careers. These participants were Jessie and Willow. Both expressed a desire to mentor preservice teachers, but their environments played a role in why they had not yet mentored. Jessie noted that by teaching a foreign language, there are likely few preservice teachers heading into this field, therefore lessening the demand for mentors to preservice foreign language teachers. Willow expressed the belief that her self-contained ESE classroom setting is likely a deterrent. She believed that few preservice teachers are selecting ESE as a major and that the needs of her students may be too overwhelming for some.

Emergent Themes

The data were analyzed and important information was pulled and organized. These findings were labeled with temporary category titles. Using the constant comparison method of data analysis, the same process was conducted with each new interview. The temporary categories were adjusted based on additional important information from subsequent interviews. During the final analysis of the data, the temporary categories were grouped into larger premises,

which were branded with a theme. Three themes concerning mentoring became evident through the voice of the participants. The three themes were as follows: (1) helps me, (2) helps others, and (3) helps profession. Descriptions of the three themes are presented in this section along with explanations and support from exemplar participant responses.

Theme 1: Helps me. All three of the emerging themes center around the idea of helping. While the term is commonly used, *help* has several meanings and therefore needs to be defined in context of this study. Some of the definitions of *help* in the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, include the following: “to give assistance or support to; to make more pleasant or bearable; to be of use; to further the advancement of; to change for the better” (merriam-webster.com, n.d.). All of these definitions allude to a positive gain as a result of being *helped*. The theme *helps me* depicts this same idea. The “me” in *helps me* is the individual. In the context of this theme, the individual refers to the mentor.

The theme *helps me* focuses on what the mentor feels they gain from the mentoring experience. It can be divided into two subthemes. The subthemes are as follows: professional development and financial assistance. Each of the seven participants expressed ideas that related to the theme helps me; however, not all of them voiced thoughts that could be subsumed under both of the subcategories.

Helps me: Professional development. Professional development is often pictured to be some type of formalized training that adds to an individual’s understanding and practice. While this was reflected within this theme, professional development in the theme *helps me* incorporates a broader definition. Professional development, in this context, was both formal and informal, and it was positive, professional growth that was gained by both the mentor and mentee. The concepts, under the umbrella of professional development, were further broken

down into three notions to illustrate the subtheme more clearly. Those three concepts were knowledge, skills, and attitude.

Helps me: Professional development concerning knowledge. New knowledge gain by participating in mentoring relationships was acknowledged by three of the seven participants. In observing her mentee teach her class, Cindy believed that she gained new strategies for working with students that she could incorporate into her own practice. "I feel like the new ideas that she brought in were good for me too...it was kind of like being in college again yourself." Meg echoed the same notion about gaining new knowledge from a mentee. "I think that education is always changing and always growing. And so, I think that I will eventually be phasing out of being in college and different programs and that mentoring is a way for me to still be connected and for me to still be learning." Meg stressed that currency in the classroom is important and that mentees in college, teaching in her classroom, can help her to vicariously gain the knowledge to be able to stay up to date on the latest in the field of education. Furthermore, Eugene noted that serving as a mentor teacher helps the mentor to strength their current knowledge level. He emphasized that it makes the mentor really test their own knowledge level and, in his words, "It begins to help me reinforce the things that I think I know."

Helps me: Professional development concerning skills - communication. Beyond professionally developing through the acquisition of knowledge, several mentors also shared that mentoring preservice teachers helped them to attain new skills. One of the set of skills that was repeatedly addressed in the area of communication. Both Cindy and Jasmine discussed that serving as mentor to preservice teachers, they grew in their ability to communicate with adults and to provide feedback on another's performance. Having spent much of her career speaking with elementary-aged children, Jasmine pointed out that her principal told her that

communicating with adults is much different. She said her principal told her that “you can’t just say whatever comes to mind” when speaking with adults. Jasmine interned at the school where she taught and felt that she was always treated as a “baby” by her peers. She was excited, prior to her first time serving as a mentor, because she knew this would give her the opportunity to be a leader and learn how to communicate with other adults who saw her as the leader, not the novice. Additionally, Jasmine stated that during graduate school, she learned the importance of getting buy-in when working with mentees. In prior years, she might have just told a mentee what to do, but after developing more knowledge and skills through graduate courses, she asked them questions such as, “What do you think we should do? What are your thoughts on this?” She further explained that she discovered how to communicate in a way where they both self-reflected instead of just waiting for instruction from another.

Like Jasmine, Cindy believed as a mentor, she was able to learn how to better communicate with adults. In her path to becoming a principal, mentoring helped her gain skills in how to give “appropriate feedback to where you’re not harming someone’s ego.” After a bad experience receiving feedback in the mentee role, Cindy stated that she “was very strategic in that.” With her mentees, she would ask herself, “How can I say this to her without hurting her feelings but in a way that she was still learning like she needed to?” Furthermore, Cindy shared that she had to learn to communicate with someone living in a different “world” from herself. Cindy noted that she is a mother and an experienced teacher and she had to be able to communicate well with a college student with few commitments beyond their schoolwork. Angela also felt she grew in communication skills. She pointed out that serving as mentor helped her to learn “how to read people well.”

While acknowledging that attaining new communication skills came through mentoring, Eugene and Jasmine also tied this back to their learning in graduate school. As noted early, Jasmine improved her communication skills with adults while mentoring. Jasmine also mentioned that when given the opportunity in graduate school to select topics of interest for class assignments, she regularly chooses to look at research on working with adults and professional development. What she has learned with her mentees is driving her interest in graduate school and vice versa. Eugene connected his gaining of communication skills and his graduate school work when he said, "I'm starting to have conversations with mentees. It helps me to reinforce what I'm reading and the conversations that I'm having, I'm like...if we're talking about race and systemic racism...if I'm having those conversations now, I'm thinking I can support those conversations with my reading. And so, I think that's a benefit."

Helps me: Professional development concerning skills – flexibility. Beyond communication skills, the participants also spoke about increased flexibility as a help component they gained through mentoring. Jasmine recognized that she had a method of working that was comfortable, but that when working with a mentee, it might be necessary to stretch yourself some and to adjust to incorporate the method of another. "I used to want the work at a certain time and one of the girls said, 'I work all night.' Like, she would be up all night and send me stuff at one or two o'clock in the morning. And I'm annoyed because I wanted it before I went to bed that night so I could vet it. But, if that's how she works, that's how she works, as long as she gets it done. So, I just learned to be flexible, about interacting, about expectations."

Beyond learning how to be flexible with timeframes, some participants discussed learning flexibility when sharing their students and classrooms with another. Cindy accepted that she was previously "a control freak" but that working with a preservice teacher helped her to

change that behavior. “I had to learn to allow that person to take over my classroom and, you know, step back a little bit.” Angela’s growth in flexibility was a little different than Cindy’s. Teaching in a Montessori school, Angela expressed that there are certain ways that teachers must interact with students. She further explained that depending on where a Montessori teacher received their training, those non-negotiables vary. Over the years, Angela noted that she has had to become a little less stringent on approach if her mentee had received different training. “In my experience in the past, almost every single intern has said, ‘My training center said you do it this way.’ I understand that, but we need consistency and continuity in the classroom. Remember, we present each Montessori material the same way, so let’s present it my way, and if you’re way is better, I’m flexible. So, that’s what I do now. I say, so let’s take a look at it. We’ll compare the two. If your presentation is better, the kids like it, we’ll do it your way. So, I’ve become more flexible over the years...Since they have the current training, I tend to follow their training...Maybe they are doing things differently in Montessori that I don’t know about. So, I tend to observe more and watch them and if the children like it better, it works better, the children learn better and repeat it more, I’ll change the way I do things.”

Helps me: Professional development concerning skills – building relationships. New skills gained in terms of building relationships was another recurring idea with the participants. Eugene, who was heavily influenced by his relationship with his own mentor, discussed that building relationships with mentees is of the upmost importance. “People may work at a job, but there are some personal things that may lend to their work...Those personal things lend to that professional. So, I think if you are going to mentor someone, you have to know them to better guide them. You know, like you really have to know them.” Eugene also acknowledged that mentoring helped him to think beyond self and “think about other people.”

Both Eugene and Jasmine shared that serving as a mentor assisted them in learning to be approachable and building longstanding relationships with others. Jasmine hoped that she built such good relationships with her mentees that they knew they have a “lifelong mentor, that cheerleader” long after they left her classroom. She mentioned that she has kept in touch with some of her previous mentees and even aimed to visit one in her new teaching role in order to help her further with classroom management. Likewise, Eugene expressed, “Knowing that it’s difficult sometimes for people to sometimes ask for help, I’m trying to make sure that I’m open and approachable enough to where they welcome the help.” Building from his own experiences as a mentee, Eugene was thankful that he had developed enough skills in relationship building that he was not a barrier to mentees when they had questions they really needed to ask.

Helps me: Professional development concerning attitudes. A third way that the participants were helped in terms of professional development was in the area of attitude. The majority of the participants commented on attitude changes as a result of participating in mentoring. Having not mentored before, but based on her time in the mentee role, Jessie predicted that mentoring was a positive for the mindset of a veteran teacher. She mentioned that the mentor teacher is “getting a different perspective on some things.” Jessie went on to say, “It’s always good to get another perspective...People don’t always update things and get stuck in their ways and don’t try to spice things up...I feel like having a mentee, a person with a fresh eye...just learning things and still learning can bring good ways to challenge you.”

Cindy also felt that working with a preservice teacher helped her, a veteran teacher, to grow in the area of attitude. Cindy recalled her first venture into mentoring where she led a training for peer teachers. She commented, “I did a math professional development in August where I taught teachers. In my county. All the 4th and 5th grade teachers. And that was so much

fun. I think I enjoyed that more, teaching them, seeing them realize what they could do in their classrooms, than I did teaching kids.” Cindy felt mentoring helped her to have a broader perspective and to look beyond the four walls of her classroom. In addition, she mentioned that her attitude in the classroom shifted as she was given more opportunity to reflect and self-evaluate in the role of mentor. Cindy suggested, “that all teachers have a mentee at some point” but clarified that it should be “when they’re ready.”

Jasmine shared that her attitude on professionalism changed when she served as a mentor to preservice teachers. She admitted to enjoying wearing “yoga pants to school every day,” but decided that when she began mentoring that more appropriate work clothing was probably best. “I wanted to be an example for them, so I would dress the part of a leader.” Jasmine knew others were watching and changed her daily practice to be more of a role model and “to really step up and lead.”

For two of the participants, not only mentoring but also being in graduate school helped them grow professionally and shift their attitudes. Meg noted the connection in attitude that could be found in both mentoring and graduate school. First, she stated, “I think that you choose to go to graduate school and you choose to further your education.” Then, when asked if she thought that related in any way to mentoring, she said, “Oh, definitely! Yeah, I think that it’s the same thing. I mean, you could say no. You don’t have to mentor anybody.” Meg saw both as was to stay current and to keep a fresh perspective. When asked about connections between mentoring and graduate school, Eugene responded that there was a parallel for him. Eugene noted that as a graduate student, he was in the position of mentee and because of that, he was “much more inclined to be empathetic” to his own mentee. His attitude toward his mentee was altered because of his graduate school experience.

Helps me: Financial assistance. The theme *helps me* was described as a positive gain that was received by the individual as a result of participating in the mentoring process. Not only did the data reflect that mentors and mentees gained in professional development through mentoring, but mentors believed they could gain financially from serving as a mentor. The financial gains noted were in the form of tuition vouchers and additional pay.

Helps me: Financial assistance – tuition vouchers. A few participants mentioned tuition vouchers awarded by the preservice teachers' university to be an advantage gained from mentoring. Currently, UNF offers teachers who mentor preservice teachers in their internship experience a voucher that will pay the tuition for up to six credit hours in a single semester. Each time a teacher hosts a UNF intern for a full semester, they are eligible to receive a 6-credit voucher. Other universities often offer similar vouchers for hosting their preservice teachers. However, all of the participants in this case were UNF graduate students, so they expressed their appreciation specifically to UNF because the vouchers directly assisted in the payment of some of their graduate courses.

Initially when asked about benefits, Cindy did not bring up the idea of tuition vouchers. As the interview was concluding, the idea came to Cindy, and she was adamant her thoughts on the vouchers were added to the interview transcript. She shared that she had received the tuition voucher from UNF when she had her fulltime intern a few years prior. Cindy stated, "...it sat in my drawer for three years. I hadn't touched it...and I almost lost the paper. But I actually got my first semester of college [graduate school] paid for, having that intern and I thought that was the biggest, perfect thing." The financial assistance gained from the voucher helped Cindy to more easily pursue her professional goal of completing graduate school.

It is important to note that Cindy was unaware of this help when she entered into the mentoring relationship with her preservice teacher. She shared, “I had no idea the whole time I mentored her, so it wasn’t like I did it for that. But I was like, oh, sign me up again...I think that was a good thing. Cause it is hard for teachers. We already do so many things after school that you don’t get paid for.” While that was a help to Cindy within itself, she also communicated that the voucher demonstrated UNF’s appreciation for her work as a mentor when she verbalized, “Because they actually felt like your time was worth it, you know?” The feeling of gratitude was an extra bonus received by Cindy in addition to the financial assistance gained from the voucher.

Jasmine also discussed how she was helped financially by being a mentor. Like, Cindy, Jasmine acknowledged the receipt of a tuition voucher from UNF as a benefit. Early on in our conversation, Jasmine shared that many teachers are not taking advantage of money that is available to them to attend graduate school. Referring specifically to the UNF vouchers, she said that many of her peer teachers had vouchers for having interns that they were not using. When I asked her later in the interview if she felt that the tuition vouchers were a benefit, she responded with a resounding yes. “Yeah. That paid for my summer. I forgot about that. That goes without saying, girl, yeah.” She further explained that when she doubled up on classes over the summer, the tuition voucher played a large role in her ability to speed up her graduate studies. She demonstrated her gratefulness for them when she said, “That was certainly a benefit” and then quickly added, “Make sure you put that in there [the transcript], so they won’t stop that [the tuition vouchers].”

Helps me: Financial assistance – additional pay. Unlike Cindy, Jasmine expressed how she was able to gain financially through additional pay. Jasmine participated in a grant funded program where the mentors were paid a stipend for serving as mentors to preservice teachers.

She expressed her appreciation for this and also realized how rare it is that mentors get paid a stipend by a university when she stated, “They paid the Directing Teachers, which they never get paid.” Having also received a tuition voucher, Jasmine did acknowledge that she was part of a pilot program with a small number of participants and that she predicted that as the program grew, mentors may not receive financial assistance through both a tuition voucher and additional pay. In a similar thought, Jessie felt that additional pay could be helpful to mentor teachers. Jessie articulated that teachers are frustrated with their pay as “they don’t get paid very much.” She continued with, “I feel like good teachers can get overwhelmed and don’t want to actually like put in the extra time it might take to have that [a mentee] and the responsibility that it goes along with it...I don’t know if there’s a stipend.” When asked to clarify about the stipend, she expressed that some teachers may be more motivated by the help of additional pay. “I think that [additional pay] would definitely, probably sweeten the deal for some people.”

Helps me: Financial assistance – beyond tuition vouchers and additional pay. An additional financial help that Jasmine acknowledge was professional development. “I benefitted too because they [UNF grant funded program] would give us professional development every month and you know it would be just different things like one of them was management.” This is a financial help because in some instances, teachers are required to pay for additional professional development. As a mentor to a preservice teacher in this situation, Jasmine was afforded this benefit free of charge. Under the same idea of professional development, Willow spoke about the fact that school districts will offer teachers continuing education points for hosting preservice teachers. Nevertheless, Willow did not see this as a help. Even though it could potentially keep her from having to pay for additional professional development courses for recertification, Willow said it was not motivating to her and “probably would not be to

anyone else in ESE.” Having not mentored preservice teachers yet, however, she did note that additional pay would be motivating.

Theme 2: Helps others. As with the first theme, *help* is a central idea in the *helps others* theme. The word *help* in this theme can be defined similarly to how it was in the first theme. *Help* still signifies that an element is being presented that makes the experience more enjoyable, offers support, or improves the situation (merriam-webster.com, n.d.). *Helps* in the theme of *helps others* should also be seen as a positive. The “others” can be defined as the mentor, the mentee, students, or other individuals. The helps others theme is divided into two subthemes. The subthemes are as follows: unconditional approach and conditional approach.

Helps others: Unconditional approach. Analysis of the participant responses yielded two mindsets on mentoring. Some participants felt commitment to the task of mentoring no matter what, while others seemed to be committed if the conditions were right. These two approaches yielded the two subthemes of unconditional and conditional. The participants with an unconditional approach shared thoughts that were more altruistic in nature and their drive to participate in a mentoring relationship appeared to come from something intrinsic.

Eugene seemed to embody the unconditional approach towards mentoring. Repeatedly throughout his interview, he expressed a strong held desire to mentor because of the way that it made him feel. “I’m a very altruistic person. That’s one of my principle values, to give and so, just the gratification of being able to...I have something that can assist someone else, feels good. So that, within itself, is a benefit.” He repeated these sentiments later in the interview when asked specifically about his feelings towards his previous mentoring experiences. In his words, “Fulfilling. Very fulfilling. To be able to impart experience, knowledge, into someone or give

them something that is of value is fulfilling. It is gratifying.” In his own gain, he felt he was also able to help others.

Eugene had a long history participating in mentoring relationships. Inspired by his own mentor, he chose to pursue a doctorate in education. When working in the business field and in his early years in teaching, he mentored youth. As he reported, it was part of him and something that he would continue doing. Eugene did have a moment where he questioned his motives when he said, “I am going to mentor. I love teaching. I love being a resource to other folks. I’m just wired that way. It makes me feel good so it might be more selfish than anything. I’m saying altruistic, but it actually may be very selfish. [laughs]. It makes me feel good.” No matter the exact motive, Eugene was committed to helping others because of what he gained from the experience.

Meg had a similar approach for mentoring in that she wanted to help others by passing on what she knows. When asked to describe her previous mentoring experiences, Meg stated, “I absolutely loved it...I think I am good at what I do. And so, I like being able to share that and share my passion with other people. So, whether it be...leading by example...giving advice. I think it is really valuable to pass that on to somebody else.” She also felt that personal gain when serving as a mentor. Angela’s incentive for mentoring also seemed to be rooted in sharing her passion for teaching. She expressed how her time in graduate school has helped her have a bigger picture perspective and wanted to pass that on. She shared, “Since I started my master’s...I just value education so much...I see it more than just teaching children things. It’s about the whole child. And that’s what I want them to see.” Similar to Meg, Angela wanted to help others by imparting her love of teaching with them. Angela also voiced her appreciation for

the opportunity to help others. "I just feel so fortunate that I get to work with so many different types of people and influence them."

Cindy and Jessie both expressed a pay-it-forward mindset. Cindy used what she had gained as a mentee for her stimulus to work with preservice teachers. When asked to serve as a mentor for the first time, Cindy shared that she "felt like I could help her, the way my intern teacher helped me." Cindy also articulated that some of her motivation was because her peer teacher mentor, once she obtained her first job, was less than helpful and that she wanted to keep someone else from falling into a similar situation. Jessie specifically stated her belief that helping others entering the field of education was imperative. While she had not yet had the opportunity to mentor, Jessie said, "I think it's important to put in and give back and pay it forward." Later in her interview, Jessie demonstrated the unconditional approach to helping others. She was asked about what she believed were barriers in mentoring and how she felt those barriers might impact a mentor's decision to mentor a preservice teacher. After listing some potential barriers, Jessie did not hesitate when responding that "I don't think any of the barriers would affect my decision. I would probably just jump in."

Jasmine was another participant that displayed an unconditional mindset when it came to her feelings about helping others entering the field. She was an exemplar of the unconditional mindset. Throughout her interview, Jasmine divulged that she was passionate about working with the next generation of teachers. She even stated that she was "madly obsessed with grooming new teachers." Jasmine attributed her graduate school experience to her new-found perspective to be more student-centered instead of teacher-centered, similarly to Angela. Jasmine wanted to pass this on to others and felt restricted when she wasn't continually granted an intern. "I don't get enough of them [preservice teachers]. Like, who is this eager to have

interns and doesn't always have one. I should have an intern every semester of the year because I'm obsessed with it. But nobody's asked me." Jasmine did offer some conditional type statements to helping others, as will be revealed with the discussion of the next subtheme, but overall, she was committed to mentoring despite any potential impediments. When asked directly if she felt perceived barriers would keep her from mentoring, she responded with, "I don't. I would do it for no credit. I would do it if it pissed me off. I'm telling you, I'm mildly obsessed with grooming teachers because it's so important."

Helps others: Conditional approach. Some participants shared an unconditional approach towards mentoring preservice teachers, while others seemed ready to act if the conditions were right. The latter set of participants demonstrated a conditional approach. Their attitude represented an if-then notion. They could be happy being a mentor or happy not being one. It was not an automatic "yes" for them. While those with the conditional approach gave the impression they were very willing to help others, it was obvious that their decision would be based on if the circumstances fit their requirements. It is important to note that some participants demonstrated feelings that were both conditional and unconditional.

Willow was an exemplar of the conditional approach. At this point, she had not yet mentored any preservice teachers. Willow taught students in a self-contained ESE setting and attributed this environment to the likely reason as to why she had not yet had any preservice teachers interested in completing field work in her classroom. She described her daily work as tough and knew it was not the right setting for everyone. "I think that a lot of people are just not going for ESE anymore due to the behaviors...You're running after this kid, changing a diaper on this kid...Because I've heard people say, I didn't go to school for four years to chase _____ [student name] down the road or jump a fence. They don't want that." Willow loved her career

choice, having worked in this setting for 19 years, but she knew it could be hard for others to accept. While she was willing to mentor new teachers in ESE, she readily admitted that “if I have to babysit you and get into the whys...and I’m patting you on the back trying to make you feel better, then I don’t want you there. I don’t want to give anybody Alka Seltzer.”

Willow continually shared that she loved her students and that she wanted to help others feel the same way. She remarked, “I think awareness is key and I would want to make that person more aware of what’s going on...because have a great need.” Willow looked forward to working with students who were open-minded. “If they have that approach [open-mindedness] coming in the door, I’m more than happy to welcome them.” However, her overarching conditional approach continued to be prevalent. “If I had a bold individual, that would help. But if I’ve got to protect you from getting stabbed, that’s another headache for me...And if they are not willing to get their hands wet and I need to tell you what to do and how to change _____ [student name], that’s too much of a hassle. It’s too much of a hassle...They have to have tough skin to come in the door.”

The other four participants that articulated conditional statements concerning mentoring were also participants that voiced unconditional views. For example, Cindy, who wanted to help others because of how she was helped, also shared that “I feel like mentoring is perfect for both people as long as you have an open mind.” In the same manner, Meg admitted that she would consider the situation before agreeing to mentor. “I think that in any given scenario that you would weigh in if you want to do an opportunity [mentor a preservice teacher].” Unlike Cindy, Meg pointed out that her conditional decision to help a mentee or not may not be based on the adults in the equation, but the students. She stated, “I also think that accepting, that being a mentor, could honestly have to do with the dynamics of your class in any given year. So, if I

have a lot of high-need children in my class, then maybe that wouldn't be a good year to accept another role for me to have because I want to be able to give my all to a mentee and I wouldn't want it to necessarily take away from my class."

While not explicitly stating that they wouldn't want to work with preservice teachers if the conditions were not right, Angela, Cindy, and Jasmine all communicated situations that made mentoring less than ideal. Like Willow, Angela noted that a mentee's lack of enthusiasm was off-putting. Angela stated, "I am more willing to do it [mentor] with people who are passionate about teaching." Cindy acknowledged that "I felt the more prepared a student [preservice teacher] is, the more they want to learn, it makes it a more positive experience." Both Angela and Cindy expressed the conditional mindset to helping others in that if the mentees came with the right prerequisites, it would make the mentoring experience more effective. What's more, Cindy mentioned that she accepted her first intern because she knew her, she knew she was good, and she felt could help her.

Jasmine, who was admittedly "obsessed" with mentoring, also noted frustrating circumstances with mentees that may make her second-guess her unconditional approach of helping others. Early on in the interview, she articulated, "I think that sometimes they don't come with the things that I would have wanted them to come equipped with. Mindset. I don't always think that they have the work ethic that is needed." After expressing this view, Jasmine was quick to quiet this irritation with the belief that it was her job as a mentor to change this attitude and prepare them for the role of teacher.

Later on, when discussing perceived barriers, Jasmine voiced frustration for when mentees don't come prepared in the manner in which she would prefer. "I have no control over the information that they are receiving from professors. Sometimes I just want to be like, will

you teach them how to do ____ because when I have them, I'm more focusing on the planning of the lesson, not the pedagogy. I need someone to teach them pedagogy...Because instead of spending my time fine tuning a classroom management plan, I've got to teach you how to teach the lesson because you truly don't understand how to multiply two digits by two digits. You don't understand the conceptual way. You know the algorithm, but the algorithm we don't need." Again, Jasmine did not state that these conditions would keep her from mentoring, she was an exemplar of the unconditional mindset and shared that she would mentor no matter what, but with the circumstances less than ideal, she felt it made her job as mentor harder.

Theme 3: Helps profession. The third theme that developed through data analysis looks different from the first two themes. With *helps me* and *helps others*, the tone was optimistic and positive, even when some mentor frustrations were expressed with conditional mindsets. The third theme, *helps profession*, functions differently because it has two distinct subthemes that seem to struggle against one another. Those subthemes are as follows: facilitators and potential impediments. The facilitators are additional perceived benefits that arise from the mentoring relationship, while the potential impediments are hindrances that could possibly lessen a mentor's decision to engage in mentoring. With both the facilitators and the potential impediments, the overarching premise is still in *helping the profession*.

Helps profession: Facilitators. A facilitator can be defined as "someone or something that facilitates," or makes something easier (merriam-webster.com, n.d.). In this first subtheme of *helps profession*, the facilitators are advantages that can be received by the mentee, mentor, or in some cases both individuals. These facilitators *help the profession* in a mentoring relationship because they make something easier for the parties involved and because of that, they may be more likely to participate in mentoring.

Helps profession: Facilitators – benefits to mentees. Jasmine offered several thoughts on how she felt mentees could gain from participating in mentoring. Since she taught in a Title I setting, Jasmine believed this was the training environment for a mentee. “I’m preparing them for the real beast. It is one thing to be going to the beach, but it’s another thing to be going to the eastside of Main Street. I mean, it’s not the same. I will always say that. I will argue that...I think there is a huge benefit to my mentoring because they had that experience of rough, rough kids.” Jasmine maintained that if preservice teachers completed field work in inner city schools, they would benefit from being most prepared. They could learn in a tough setting where they were continually supported by a mentor. She further explained with, “They saw me have crappy days with my kids, but they saw me persevere. They saw me come back the next day. They saw me come back after Christmas vacation. I think it was huge benefit.” Additionally, Jasmine contended that if preservice teachers completed field work with competent mentors, then they would be more likely to stay in education and not become a part of the statistics of new teachers leaving the career. In her words, “If they can start out the right way, I know they will stay. I know it...I really believe that if you can do it [mentor preservice teachers] the right way...your intern will stay longer and not burnout.” To her, supporting mentees in tough environments and providing strong foundational experiences in education were facilitators that would not only help the mentee, but on a greater scale *help the profession*.

Helps profession: Facilitators – benefits to mentor. Participants also shared thoughts on how they believed the *profession was helped* with advantages that facilitated the role of the mentor. Two participants mentioned how mentoring a preservice teacher could make the workload lighter for the mentor. Jessie commented that having a mentee could “take some things off your plate” while also noting that is only if a mentor was not a “control freak” and

could allow someone else to take over some of the responsibilities. Cindy, who enjoyed watching her students learn from someone else, recalled how much an additional adult in the room was beneficial to her and her students. The semester that Cindy had her preservice teacher fulltime, she said it was during the year that half of her class were students with disabilities and/or students who were struggling with grade level standards. She pointed out that when in her own internship, her mentor used the time to do paperwork. In her words, "I used that time... While she had a teacher station, I also had a teacher station. So, it was very positive for those kids that really needed help that year. So, an extra hand was perfect."

In addition to the facilitator of extra help, two participants commented on how serving as a mentor was a facilitator because it helped them to be viewed as a leader. Eugene shared that once he began mentoring, he was "seen differently" by his administrators and peers. He felt they recognized his new leadership abilities and offered him "stretch assignments" to see what he could do with increased responsibilities. Likewise, Jasmine appreciated the opportunity to be seen as a leader. As noted earlier, Jasmine felt she was treated as a baby by her peer teachers early in her career. When she began mentoring, she reported that it was different. "These interns did not know me. They were the babies. They were real babies and I wasn't a baby to them. I was mature and well-groomed at this and they looked at me like a leader. So, I knew this was going to be my first opportunity to really step up and lead."

Both and Cindy and Jasmine discussed the facilitators of pride and satisfaction that they gained from serving as mentor. Cindy's first foray into mentoring was by leading a professional development for peer teachers in her district in her content area. She commented that "seeing them and knowing that they could take what I told them back to their room and affect more children than just my classroom was exciting." Additionally, this joy was one of the stimuli for

Cindy to enroll in graduate school. Jasmine equated her pride as a mentor to the pride of a mother. Similar to a mother, she wanted her mentees to represent her well. She explained by saying, "I feel like you're walking around saying you were in _____'s [participant's name] classroom. You better act like you know something because they all know who I am and they're going to put my name beside it. But I think that's also good. I wish that all mentors took it as that sense of pride. Like this is my intern. I'm putting my stamp of approval on them, on this person, and when they go out into the world, they're a reflection of me, just like my kids."

Other facilitators that helped the profession were the reinforcement of skills and networking with other leaders. Eugene was thankful for the chance to reinforce what he already knew from mentoring. In his words, "It's a lot different when you have to teach and show and share. You begin to fine tune your craft. You become better at articulating something." For him, performing in front of a mentee made him better at his profession. Meanwhile, Jasmine showed her appreciation for the opportunity to network and get to know others in the field of education. Through her particular grant-funded mentoring project, she got to know university faculty well and even received the opportunity to meet individually with the dean. Sharing her excitement, she exclaimed, "I mean how cool is that! The dean of a college meets with a little old nobody." Jasmine also mentioned that with the additional professional development that was offered in her grant program, she had several opportunities for organized collaboration with peer teachers who were also mentoring to see what they were doing with their interns and how it was working. In addition to the professional development itself, Jasmine labeled the collaboration time with her peers as a benefit to the mentoring experience and said the professional conversation "is something that we don't do enough of in education."

Helps profession: Facilitators - benefits to both the mentee and the mentor. An analysis of the data also yielded facilitators that helped the profession with both the mentor and the mentee positively gaining from the mentoring relationship. A first example of this is with Cindy. Repeatedly throughout her interview, she expressed how mentoring was a blessing to both parties. "I felt like it was a learning experience for both of us." In addition, both Cindy and Jasmine mentioned that mentoring gave them and the mentee a friend, a colleague, for years to come. Cindy was excited to share that one of her mentees not only became a friend, but also served as her team teacher for two years. She also demonstrated her appreciation for gaining a confidant when she said, "I think teachers need teachers and that's a big deal. Whether or not you are an older teacher or brand-new, I think you need to find people that are like-minded and understand your stress because if you're not a teacher, you do not understand that life."

Jasmine concurred that an added friend was a benefit. She displayed pleasure in the knowing that because of her, her mentees would "have that lifelong mentor, that cheerleader...I just think there is something special about having that lifeline in a mentor." Jasmine further explained that she has never seen it any other way and wouldn't want to. In fact, her mentor teacher, during her preservice years, was part of her wedding. Jasmine also shared facilitators that help both the mentor and mentee in the profession when both can celebrate successes. She remains in contact with her mentees and shared that she has had some tell her that they participated in meetings where they already knew the information when some of their veteran peers did not. The mentees had learned the material in the meeting when working with her and they felt confident in their skills. This was a facilitator to Jasmine as the mentor because she was proud of her work with them. It was a facilitator for her mentees because they were excited to, for once, know more than their more experience peers.

Helps profession: Potential impediments. While the facilitators may make the experience easier for the mentor and mentee, the potential impediments may make things more difficult. Impediments can be defined as “a hinderance” and impedes means “to interfere or slow progress” (merriam-webster.com, n.d.). Data analysis indicated that sometimes mentors struggle with ideas that may battle against their desires to mentor and may or may not keep them from mentoring altogether.

When first defining the term *help*, the definitions shared showed the word *help* in a positive light, like as an assistance and a support. These meanings of help clearly illustrate *helps me*, *helps others*, and first part of *helps profession*. However, there are additional definitions for the word *help*. It can also be defined as “to refrain from, avoid; to keep from occurring, prevent; to restrain (oneself) from doing something” (merriam-webster.com, n.d.). These meanings of *help* correlate with the subtheme of potential impediments. Impediments to mentoring may result in mentors avoiding mentoring opportunities.

Helps profession: Potential impediments – competing demands. All participants in this case study were in graduate school, practicing PK-12 teachers, and in some instances also serving as mentors. Several participants recognized these competing demands as potential impediments. They voiced that the combination of these commitments was hard to handle. Cindy, who had mentored preservice teachers prior to becoming a graduate student, when asked if she would continue to mentor, stated “I do not think I would be very effective as a graduate student and a mentor at the same time. Just because of that time piece and because it is harder to stay late. There are so many hours in a day, so you can’t say yes to everything.” She enjoyed the experience and saw many rewards to the process, and therefore expressed that she would love to continue mentoring after graduating with her master’s.

Meg, though near the end of her graduate program, also had not mentored since beginning her master's work. She shared, "If I were still a student, it's not something that I would probably focus on because I would feel like I already have too much to focus on...Going back to wanting to put my all into it. I would want to give my focus to that person." At the same time, Meg did acknowledge that mentoring at the same time as being in graduate school might be "a good way to balance everything that happens in life." She finished her conversation though with by firmly stating that she would not mentor while working on her master's because she "wouldn't want the craziness of my life to hinder their [the mentee's] experience."

For Eugene, the balance of life was also a potential impediment. Being a little older than Cindy and Jessie, with a wife and family at home and having moved into a new teaching position this year, he admitted difficulty in juggling the various aspects of his life. "And then just managing marriage, two kids, son in college, new workplace, not new industry, but kind of new because I've never taught third grade before...All of those things coupled with the program [doctoral program] are really challenging." He stated that he would not mentor at present because of his current position, at work and in the doctoral program. Eugene emphasized that if he was still teaching secondary math, a comfort zone for him, that mentoring would not be as difficult. But at present, he was not in a place to give to or model for another when he was still trying to feel competent teaching third grade. Eugene also shared that the second year in the doctoral program was much more demanding on him than was his first year. While passionate about mentoring, the potential impediment of difficult doctoral classwork was keeping him from mentoring. Referring to his need to focus only on his graduate school work, he said, "I'm like, just let me learn. I'm just in a learning phase right now. Let me learn."

Helps profession: Potential impediments – internal struggle. Competing demands in life demonstrate an outer struggle that could potentially impede mentors. Additionally, while mentoring *helps the profession*, mentors may also face impediments that cause an inner struggle. For starters, Cindy and Jessie both remarked that mentoring can be hard for teachers that are “control freaks.” While Cindy noted that mentoring gave her the opportunity to become more flexible and less controlling, and Jessie shared that mentoring could lighten the workload, the internal struggle to remain in control could still be present. According to Jessie, “If you’re a control freak, then it [mentoring] would be a negative thing.”

Additionally, Jessie and Eugene commented that mentors may deal with an inner struggle in terms of confidence in their abilities as a teacher and mentor. Jessie believed that confidence could be a barrier for some teachers. She said, “I know my reviews come back and say I’m highly effective, but do I really have what it takes to teach these people what it takes to teach?” She worried that she might do something wrong in front of them, having teaching that is outdated, or not know how to do something that they need to know. She expressed that if mentors did not feel confident in their abilities, that could “shake some people from wanting to be a mentor.” Jessie was quick to point out that this may not be a concern for graduate students in general, however. “I don’t know that confidence would be as much of a shakedown if you’re in graduate school. You’re still one of those people that are constantly trying to learn and so I feel like you would be more secure and so that would be a better reason for you to have one [a mentee].”

Eugene articulated similar thoughts on the inner struggle of confidence. He enjoyed being seen as a leader, but at the same time realized how vulnerable he was in the position of mentor. He shared his inner struggle when he expressed a fear of “maybe not having it all

together, not knowing.” He continued with, “Sometimes I’m like, well I have to learn too. So, sometimes I’m learning, and I don’t have the tools for a situation or what they’re needing at that moment. Sometimes I could be like, I don’t have that answer right now, but we can get it.”

Eugene recognized that mentors could work to get the answer for their mentees and continue to help, but that sometimes there is pressure when someone else is watching you and that it might be a fight to keep up your confidence. For Jessie and Eugene, the impediment of the inner struggle with confidence did not deter them from mentoring, but they indicated some impediments distracted them from their focus.

Helps profession: Potential impediments – time as a problem. In every interview, the concept of time found its way into the conversation. All participants recognized that mentoring a preservice teacher takes additional time. For some participants, this potential impediment was a problem. For others it was not. Willow confessed that for teachers, time is always a concern, even without mentoring. Because of her position in an ESE classroom, Willow affirmed that she must differentiate more than the average teacher. She said, “It [teaching] takes a lot of time. You can’t do all you want to in a day. You have to come in early or stay late to get things done.” She accepted that adding a mentee to her current situation would add more to her limited worktime and that that would be difficult for her. Jessie concurred with how this could stress teachers when she said, “I feel like good teachers can get overwhelmed and don’t want to actually like put in the extra time it might take to have that and the responsibility.” Whether a mentor wants to add the extra responsibility or not, the time limitations are still present potential impediments.

In addition to addressing time as a possible barrier when adding an intern, Jessie further expressed time as a problem when she added in the workload of a graduate student. In her first

semester of her doctoral program, Jessie admitted that school “does take a lot of time. Like you have to be able to dedicate a whole day on the weekends and even more than that sometimes on weeknights.” She followed up this thought with worrying about what that might look like when also adding a mentee to the list of responsibilities. Jessie emphasized that graduate school and mentoring compete for the same time and at the end of the day, there are only so many hours to complete tasks.

Helps profession: Potential impediments – time not as a problem. While still accepting that mentoring and graduate school are time consuming, other participants did not see the potential impediment of time as a deterrent. Cindy acknowledged, “It’s harder. It [mentoring] does take a little bit of extra time. I couldn’t leave at 3:00. I couldn’t go home and just do my work at home by myself if I needed to.” Before mentoring, she only had to think about her own schedule, but with a mentee, she admitted to having to work around his or her life as well. For Cindy, the struggle for time was not a deal breaker. She learned to manage her time well and scheduled work time with her mentee in order to get things done. She was resolved to helping a future educator but cautioned that this might not be the path for everyone. “I think it’s a big deal to take on helping someone else and if you’re not all in and if you don’t have the time for it, you should not do it.”

Angela’s feelings about time were similar to Cindy. Working in a busy primary setting, Angela shared that in an eight-hour work day, she only had 30 minutes away from her students, meaning completing tasks outside her scheduled hours was a given. Having mentored several new teachers in the Montessori setting, she acknowledged that adds to her already limited number of hours. “I don’t have time. I think because I give it 110%. I mean, if I’m going to do it, I’m going to do it well. And so, the time that I do spend [on work and on mentoring], I will

do it on the weekends. I'll do it at my home. Whatever it takes. I will stay late at school if I have to. If I have to work with the person until 5:30, I'll stay until 5:30. If I have to come in on the weekends, I come in on the weekends." While admittedly exhausted by her workload, Angela was passionate about her work and willing to work with others excited about teaching that this potential impediment did not sway her decision to mentor. When talking about the additional workload, she said, "But that's the choice I make...I am more than willing to do it with people who are passionate about teaching."

Like the others, Jasmine did not shy away from accepting her busy workload. As a wife, mother, teacher, and graduate student she was admittedly kept a hectic schedule. Jasmine also shared that she has a second job, which was not noted by any other participants. "Sometimes just the time commitment is a struggle. I have an 11-year-old and as much as I love face-to-face classes, they've obviously got to be at night and some of these courses are going to like 8:30. Then I leave at 8:30 and I'm home at 9:00. I have to eat dinner. Your kid is already asleep.... It's not like you can just go to sleep. Your mind is still going because you've been thinking. So, that's been a bit of a struggle. And...I work another job. So, Saturdays I'm working all day long. So, Sundays, I just have to do schoolwork. Like, every Sunday." Like Angela and Cindy, Jasmine was not deterred from mentoring because of lack of time. The sacrifice of time was worth it because she felt the work was important. "But it [mentoring] hasn't been something that I couldn't do. You can do whatever you want. It's how much value do I put on it."

Jessie was unique in that she professed the potential impediment of time to be both a problem and not a problem. When asked about the contradiction, she laughed and acknowledged her support of both ideas. Earlier, it was recorded that Jessie admitted the additional work of graduate school and mentoring to be challenging. However, Jessie also felt that personally she

works best with many things to balance. “My personality is such that I don’t function with an empty plate...So, I’m like, yeah, pile it on. I got it. I can do everything. That’s just how I was raised.” Jessie was willing to help the profession by mentoring even with time as a concern.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter the methodology was briefly reviewed, the sample was described, and the emerging themes were presented and explained. The sample of participants included in this case study were all PK-12 teachers that were also working on a graduate degree at UNF. Some of the participants had served as mentors before while others had not, but all offered thoughts on the mentoring experience and how it relates to being a graduate student. The constant comparative analysis process gave the researcher ample time to work through the data, develop initial categories, adjust categories as new data were added, and conclude analysis with identifying the prevalent themes. All themes centered around the idea of help – helps me, helps others, and helps profession. Much of the data pointed to positives that can be taken from the mentoring relationship, but possible deterrents were also acknowledged. In Chapter 5, a final summary, discussion, and conclusions for this study will be offered. Connections to the literature and theory will be presented as well as implications, suggestions, and the strengths and limitations of this study.

Chapter 5: Summary, Findings, Implications, Suggestions, and Conclusions

Introduction

Mentoring has long been used as an effective means of personal and professional development for individuals (Eby & Lockwood 2005; Kram, 1985; Stanulis & Ames, 2009). In the professional arena, mentoring has been implemented in a variety of fields including education, to integrate and mature novices in the field (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009; Okurame, 2008; Stokrocki, 2009). Mentoring has proven to be beneficial to mentees and in recent years; the literature has also reflected that mentees have gained from the experience (Burk & Eby, 2010; Fluckiger, McGlamery, & Edick, 2006; Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Mathur, Gehrke, & Kim, 2012; Normore & Loughry, 2006; Okurame, 2008; Stokrocki, 2009; Ulvik & Langorgen, 2012).

The benefits to mentoring included rewards such as increased self-reflection, validation, isolation, and renewed commitment to their profession (Ambrosetti, 2014; Ballantyne et al., 1999; Boyer, Maney, Kamler, and Comber, 2004; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Hobson et al., 2009; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009; Jewell, 2007). However, the response to mentoring has not been fully positive, as both mentors and mentees have also described barriers faced when participating in a mentoring relationship. The barriers conveyed included obstacles such as disenchantment, impossible workloads, feelings of inadequacy, and a lack of appreciation (Ambrosetti, 2014; Bullough, 2005; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Hobson et al., 2009; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009).

Traditionally, novices in a field are partnered with veterans who serve as their mentors. This has not necessarily been someone in a supervisory role, but someone who has more experience. In university settings, while faculty often take on the role of mentor to students,

some universities are implementing mentoring programs where graduate students serve as mentors to undergraduates. Research on graduate students serving as mentors to undergraduates has indicated some differences from the average mentor, but graduate students frequently experience similar benefits and barriers (Conway et al., 2010; Evans et al., 2009; Reddick et al., 2011).

Summary of the Study

Problem, purpose, and research questions. There is a growing body of literature on using graduate students as mentors to undergraduate students; however, no research was located that specifically discussed graduate students who are also practicing PK-12 teachers. Moreover, there is research that discusses teachers mentoring undergraduate, preservice teachers, but again, research was not located that described these teacher mentors as also being graduate students. Thus, no known information about the experience of graduate student mentors that are also PK-12 teachers who work with undergraduate, preservice teachers was found. Therefore, it is unknown if the benefits and barriers experienced by other mentors and other graduate student mentors are the same for graduate students who are PK-12 teachers working with preservice teachers. This gap in the literature was the stimulus for this study.

The purpose of this case study was to uncover the perceived benefits and barriers of graduate students who were PK-12 teachers who serve or have the potential to serve as mentors to undergraduate, and preservice teachers. Furthermore, the aim of this study was to explore the influence that graduate school had on why graduate students who are also PK-12 teachers, engage in mentoring relationships with undergraduate and preservice teachers. Although this study focused on graduate students at UNF who are teachers and who mentor, information gained from this study is important because it will add to the body of research on graduate

students who mentor undergraduate students. Also, the conclusions could inform practice, policy, and training in terms of graduate and undergraduate programs in education and the mentoring of novice teachers (Reddick et al., 2012).

This study centered around three guiding research questions. Those questions were as follows: What do graduate students perceive as the benefits to mentoring preservice teachers? What do graduate students perceive as the barriers to mentoring preservice teachers? How do experiences as a graduate student influence the decision to engage in the leadership activity of serving as a mentor (Directing Teacher) to preservice teachers? To answer these questions, this researcher believed the most appropriate methodological approach was to complete a qualitative study, specifically a case study.

Review of methodology. Qualitative studies allow the researcher to conduct the research in a naturalistic, untouched setting (Patton, 2002). Patton noted that qualitative studies give the researcher the opportunity to be the instrument for data collection and to interact directly with the individuals being studied. In this study, this researcher was able to speak directly with the graduate student mentor teachers and discuss their perceptions and influences regarding mentoring. Additionally, Patton stressed that qualitative studies are accepting of “whatever emerges” (p.40). Since the research questions for this study were open-ended and not looking for hypothesized answers, a qualitative study was fitting.

Among the various qualitative approaches, a case study was deemed to be the most suitable. For one, case studies have “proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations, for evaluating program, and for informing policy” (Merriam, 1998, p. 41). As noted, the findings from this study have the potential to impact undergraduate and graduate programs in teacher education and leadership as well as the way preservice teachers participate

in the mentoring process. Another characteristic of a case study is that they focus on one particular case, or “people who share a common experience or perspective” (Patton, 2002, p. 231). This study was designed to learn more about the viewpoint of the graduate student mentor who is a PK-12 teacher and who mentors undergraduate, preservice teachers. These individuals were all sharing a mutual experience and therefore were all part of one case.

Of the three prominent case study methodologists (Merriam, Stake, and Yin), this case study most aligned with the concepts presented by Merriam (1998). According to Merriam, a case is bound or restricted to “a single entity” and that if that feature is not present, then the study cannot be a case study (p.28). Since the research questions for this study sought to gain information from just one set of individuals, the participants correspond into Merriam’s definition of a case. Merriam also purported that case studies be “particularistic...descriptive...and heuristic” (Yazan, 2015, p. 139). This case study matched all three of these ideas from Merriam. It was particularistic in that it focused on one group all facing the same experiences. The thick, rich descriptions that the study yielded made it descriptive in nature. Also, it was heuristic because the participants, the researcher, and the reader can all learn more about themselves from the findings.

Moreover, Merriam (1998) advocated that case studies be conducted in an organized and systematic manner beginning with a review of the literature and a theoretical framework before moving to identify the research problem and questions. This study was conducted following the same logic and structure. This researcher began with a thorough review of the literature to determine gaps in knowledge before determining purpose, questions, and next steps. Additionally, in terms of data analysis, Merriam’s maintains that the researcher analyzes the data and creates meaning in a qualitative study. This was true in this study. This researcher reviewed

the data multiple times, determined initial categories, continually compared new data to preliminary concepts, and created meaning through naming the final themes.

Major findings. The final themes that were established at the end of the data analysis process all focused on the idea of *helping*, which is a central concept within an effective mentoring relationship (Kram, 1985). The themes that developed were as follows: *helps me*, *helps others*, and *helps profession*. In order to clarify what these themes mean, it is beneficial to understand the word *help*. While *help* has many meanings, in terms of these themes, *help* can be defined as “to give assistance or support to; to make more pleasant or bearable; to be of use; to further the advancement of; to change for the better” (merriam-webster.com, n.d.). In general, the action of *helping* is a positive action that betters the individual.

The first theme, *helps me*, explains how the mentor is improved by participating in a mentoring relationship. There are two subthemes within *helps me*. The first is professional development. The participants expressed that they believed mentors were professionally enhanced through the experience of mentoring. These improvements could be grouped into growth in either knowledge, skills, or attitude. The second subtheme was financial assistance. The participants expressed that financial gain, whether in the form of pay, tuition vouchers, or free professional development courses, was a *help*, or benefit to the mentor. Theme number one, *helps me*, helped answer the first research question which asked about the perceived benefits to mentoring preservice teachers.

Helps others was the second theme that emerged from the data analysis. This theme incorporated ideas from the participants that mentoring not only *helps* the mentor teacher, but it *helps others* in the profession. Although all participants expressed a desire to *help others*, there were two distinct approaches to *helping others*. Some participants ascribed to an unconditional

approach. They had an altruistic attitude and had decided they would mentor in almost all situations. On the other hand, other participants expressed a conditional approach. These participants seemed very willing to mentor but only if the conditions were right. They held more of an if-then mindset with their commitment to mentoring more dependent on each particular situation. The second theme, *helps others*, helped answer the third research question. The third question asked about how the experiences of being a graduate student influenced a person's decision to engage in mentoring. The two approaches, conditional and unconditional, in the *helps others* theme begins to answer this question. Individuals are influenced by their conditional and/or unconditional attitudes towards mentoring.

The third and final theme that developed was *helps profession*. This theme was unique in that it incorporated contending ideas. There was a solid, consistent belief from the participants that mentoring *helps the profession*, but the dispute was between what *helped* facilitate the mentoring relationship and what acted as a potential impediment. Facilitators to the mentoring experience included benefits to the mentee, to the mentor, and to both the mentee and mentor. While facilitators motivated teachers to mentor, the potential impediments were obstacles that could may make a teacher refrain from mentoring. The potential impediments observed included competing demands, internal struggles, and time. This theme, *helps profession*, helped to answer both the first and second research questions. The first question asked about perceived benefits and the second question asked about perceived barriers. The facilitators part of this theme offered more answers about perceived benefits, while the potential impediments revealed information on perceived barriers.

Findings in Relation to the Literature

The findings of this study aligned closely with the what was uncovered in the review of the literature. The three themes developed from the findings support the work done in other studies examining the mentor perspective when mentoring preservice teachers and when graduate students are mentoring undergraduates.

Connections between the literature and theme 1 (*helps me*). The first theme that emerged, *helps me*, focuses on mentor gains in knowledge, skills, and attitude from serving as a mentor. One of the benefits to mentors reported in the literature was an increase in skills. Parise and Forret (2008) acknowledged that mentors learn new skills from working with mentees, including new skills in the area of technology. Meg gave a similar response to that of Parise and Forret when she stated, “I think education is always changing and always growing. And so, I think I would eventually be phasing out of being in college and different programs, like the mentorship, is a way for me to still be connected and for me to still be learning from kids who are still learning how to be current teachers.” Like the mentors in the literature, Meg felt she added to repertoire by taking knowledge from her mentees.

Several other researchers maintained that mentors increased skills (e.g. instructional, managerial, leadership) by mentoring novice teachers (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Hobson, et al., 2009; Hudson & Hudson, 2010). Cindy, Jasmine, and Angela all reported strengthening their skills in terms of flexibility after having mentored a preservice teacher. In addition, these same three participants remarked that they obtained better communication skills while serving as a mentor. Hobson and associates also commented that the mentors they interviewed felt better about their communication skills after mentoring. Additionally, Dolan and Johnson (2006)

assigned credit to mentoring as the reason the communication skills increased in the graduate students they studied.

The theme of *helps me* also included participants expressing an increase in leadership skills as a benefit to mentoring a preservice teacher. Eugene testified that he was able to grow as a leader by applying new graduate school learning to his work with his mentee. When asked how he benefitted professionally by being a mentor, he replied, "Some of the things that I have been learning, especially in the leadership courses, I'm able to apply immediately." Similar findings were present in the literature. Mentors, from several studies, shared that increased leadership skills were gained from serving as a mentor (Gilles & Wilson, 2004; Hudson & Hudson, 2010; Simpson et al., 2007). Furthermore, Barker and Pitts (1997) observed that mentoring helped graduate students in maturing leadership skills.

Under the *helps me* theme, increased skills in relationship building observed as a common idea through data analysis. In their studies, Hobson et al. (2009) and Iancu-Haddad and Oplatka (2009) found that mentor teachers enjoyed the lasting relationships that grew from mentoring a novice teacher. Both Jasmine and Eugene shared that building long-term relationships with mentees was a positive takeaway from participating in a mentoring relationship. In addition, Jasmine revealed that networking and growing with peers who were also mentoring was another positive in serving as a mentor. Likewise, Conway and Holcomb (2008) shared that the music teachers in their study appreciated communicating with their peers and that is what motivated some of them to engage in mentoring. Kennett and Lomas (2015) also discovered that almost a quarter of the studies they reviewed considered collaboration with peers as a benefit to mentoring.

Improved attitudes were another element that was part of the theme helps me that was developed from analyzing participant responses. Six of the seven participants in this study shared thoughts about mentors improving their attitudes as a result of participating in a mentoring relationship. Jessie, who had not yet had a chance to mentor, held that mentoring could keep mentors from being stuck in a rut. She stated, "It's always good to get perspective on some things and not get stuck in their ways or don't try to spice things up. I feel like having a mentee, a person with a fresh eye, just learning things and still learning can bring good ways to challenge you." Several researchers have conveyed similar findings, that mentors become invigorated after serving as mentors (Ambrosetti, 2014; Ballantyne et al., 1999; Boyer et al., 2004; Gilles & Wilson, 2004; Hobson, et al., 2009; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009). Moir and Bloom (2003) added "that mentoring offers veteran teachers professional replenishment" (p. 58).

Connections between the literature and theme 2 (helps others). The second theme developed from an analysis of the data were *helps others*. This theme reflects the participants' desire to help others that are new to the profession through mentoring. Some participants were unconditional in their approach, while others seemed willing to only participate if the conditions were right. Jasmine, one of the participants that sided with the unconditional approach, expressed a constant desire to want to mentor preservice teachers. She stated, "I love working with new teachers. They are just so eager to learn." Jessie expressed components of the unconditional approach when she specified that she wanted to give to others because someone gave to her. She declared, "I think it's important to put in and give back and pay it forward. And I really believe in that kind of philosophy."

The literature on graduate student mentors demonstrated similar ideas to that of Jasmine and Jessie. Reddick and associates (2011) specifically wrote that the graduate student mentors at

the IE mentoring program at the University of Texas Austin had a “pay it forward” mindset. This program held this approach in part because of their strong desire to increase diversity amongst graduate students. The participant’s responses in this study differed in that none of the participants referred to increasing diversity as a motivation for mentoring. Evans and associates (2009) also reported that the clinical psychology graduate students in their study felt personal contentment after serving as a mentor. In this study, Eugene articulated similar thoughts when he said, “Fulfilling. Very fulfilling. To be able to impart experience, knowledge, into someone or give them something that is of value is fulfilling. It is gratifying.” The participants’ expressed desire to *help others* aligned closely with what was demonstrated in the literature.

Connections between the literature and theme 3 (helps profession). The third theme that developed from the findings was *helps profession*. The central idea of this theme is that mentor helps the teaching profession, however, the data showed that even though mentoring helps, mentors can face facilitators at the same time as potential impediments. One of the facilitators that was mentioned by the participants was that mentoring can assist a veteran teacher in being seen as a leader. Eugene remarked, “When you’re mentoring folks, professionally it puts you in a different light as it relates to administration.” Likewise, Jasmine mentioned serving as a mentor took her from being seen as the “baby” in the school to a mature leader. Furthermore, Jasmine explained that her experience as a mentor has encouraged her to continue to pursue coaching and professional development leadership as potential next steps in her career. The literature on mentoring described comparable benefits. For example, Reddick and associates

2011) communicated that graduate students that were able to reaffirm their future career aspirations through serving as a mentor.

Another facilitator noted under the *helps profession* theme was that mentoring assists the mentor teacher in self-reflecting and refining their own practice. Eugene shared that mentoring “begins to help me to reinforce things that I think I know. It’s a lot different when you have to teach and show and share. You begin to fine tune your craft. You become better at articulating something.” Several researchers discussed similar findings in their studies. Many have expressed that mentoring provides an opportunity to self-reflect that would not have been present for an individual if they were not mentoring (Ambrosetti, 2014; Boyer et al., 2004; Hudson & Hudson, 2010). Additionally, Martin and Sifers (2012) found that self-examination leads mentors to ask questions of themselves and those questions lead to change. Eugene’s observation about his own self-reflective practice supported what was in the literature from other mentors.

Another facilitator in the *helps profession* theme that was noted by the participants of study was that having a mentee means more help in the classroom. Cindy recalled that her mentor teacher during her student teaching used the time to complete paperwork while Cindy, the intern, was teaching. Cindy had a different take on what to do with the extra time. She reported that she used the time to pull additional small groups to service her students with high needs. She said, “While she had a teacher station, I also had a teacher station. So, it was very positive for those kids that really needed help that year.” Many researchers have heard the same appreciation for an additional set of hands in the classroom as a result of mentoring a preservice teacher (Hudson & Hudson, 2010; Jaspers, Meijer, Prins, & Wubbels, 2014; Simpson, Hastings, & Hill, 2007). Like Cindy, mentors in the Simpson and associates (2007) study conveyed how a

lower teacher to student ratio, with another adult in the room, allowed them to better meet the needs of their students.

While focused on *helping the profession*, the third theme also incorporated participant ideas about the potential impediments of serving as a mentor to a preservice teacher. The largest of these impediments dealt with time. All of the participants acknowledge the additional time it takes in a teacher's already busy schedule to mentor a novice in addition to the time it takes to be a graduate student. For example, Jessie acknowledged, "I think time is probably a huge factor because it does take a lot of time [to go to graduate school]. You have to be able to dedicate a whole day on the weekends and even more than that sometimes and weeknights. Then, are we talking if they were mentoring and in graduate school? Okay. So, that's way more time that it eats up."

The scarcity of time was also a recurring idea in the literature on mentoring. In the literature, mentors described having difficulty maintaining a balance in life with the onset of additional demands that come with being an effective mentor (Hobson et al., 2009; Hudson & Hudson, 2010; Jaspers et al., 2014; Simpson et al., 2007; Veeramah, 2014). Eugene voiced this same concern when he said, "Just managing marriage, two kids, son in college, new workplace...all of those things coupled with the program [doctoral program] are really challenging." Not all of the participants in this study saw time as an impassible barrier, but they did acknowledge it's potential to be a deterrent. This, again, aligned with the current research on mentor perspectives (Ambrosetti, 2014; Iancu-Haddad & Oplatka, 2009).

An additional potential impediment that fit under the theme of *helps profession* was the anxiety that mentors may face when performing in front of a mentee. Jessie and Eugene recognized that mentors may struggle with confidence when they know someone else is

watching what they are doing. Hobson and associates (2009) also reported that mentors experienced feelings of insecurities in the role of mentor. Eugene shared that a potential impediment for him would be not feeling confident in front of a mentee. When asked about possible barriers, he responded, "Maybe not having it all together, not knowing...I have to learn too. So, sometimes I'm learning and I don't have the tools for a situation or what they're needing at that moment." This matched with what Eby and Lockwood (2005) discovered. They reported that mentors struggled "letting your mentee down" when not knowing the right answer to their questions (p.452).

Connection to mentors as transformational leaders. In the literature, Scandura and Williams (2004) discussed that transformational leaders and mentors had similar aims. Both transformational leaders and mentors were interested in helping colleagues find success and contentment so that they remain in their professions and progress towards their greatest potential. One participant within this study clearly demonstrated the qualities of a transformational leader. Jasmine felt strongly that mentoring was directly related to how long teachers will stay in the profession. She was committed to the task for personal reasons, but also for the benefit of the mentee. She expressed this belief when she said, "If they can start out the right way, I know they will stay [in teaching]. I know it...So, I don't think that there are barriers. I think that I'll always be eager to take an intern." It appears Jasmine, like many teacher leaders, aligns her thinking about mentoring with the ideas of transformational leadership.

Findings in Relation to Theory

Review of Social Exchange Theory. The theoretical framework that was associated to this study was the Social Exchange Theory. This theory was first presented by the psychologists John Thibaut and Harold Kelley and sociologists George Homans, Peter Blau, and Richard

Emerson. Homans (1958) was the first one of this group to share his ideas about Social Exchange Theory in the mid-twentieth century. The Social Exchange Theory was established as a way to predict and explain human behavior concerning social interactions (Stafford, 2008).

Based in sociology, the premise of Social Exchange Theory is that people will evaluate the benefits (rewards/positives) and the barriers (costs/negatives) in a relationship and weigh one against the other before deciding if they want to engage socially (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1958; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). According to Stafford (2008), rewards “provide pleasure” whereas costs “provoke pain, anxiety, embarrassment, or mental and physical effort” (p. 380). Furthermore, Stafford reminded that while the Social Exchange Theory is focused on human behavior, its roots lie in economic exchange. Instead of an economic profit, the individual profits socially, as was evidenced in this study. Homans (1958) presented this theory of cost-benefit analysis in the form of a simple mathematical equation, as seen in Figure 1.

$$\text{Reward} - \text{Cost} = \text{Profit}$$

Figure 1. Homans's Formula for Social Exchange Theory (1958). This figure illustrates Homan's mathematical formula for Social Exchange Theory, which individuals use to decide if they will participate in social relationships.

Using Homans (1958) formula, if an individual views the reward more highly than the cost, they see a profit and will most likely choose to engage in a relationship. On the other hand, if the individual perceives the cost as too high, they will see a loss and likely choose not to engage (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1958; Stafford, 2008; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Thibault and Kelley (1959) pointed out that individuals can experience both positives and negatives in the same relationship. Their decision to engage, however, depends on which one they believe is more significant.

Social Exchange Theory is an economic theory that has been applied to human nature, and this situation may be troubling to researchers and other experts. Since individuals are living creatures, Stafford (2008) reminded that “social exchange relies on trust or goodwill” and is therefore dependent on what an individual chooses at the time (p. 378). In addition, Stafford communicated that even when costs seem high, individuals may still choose to participate in a social relationship if they believe it would be profitable for both parties. Both Blau (1964) and Homans (1958) noted that, as in an economic exchange, the profit might not be equal for both parties. One may feel they gain more than the other. Power and influence within a social relationship often factor into the amount of profit one feels like they received. Also, Blau reminded that social relationships can be reciprocal in nature but not necessary at the same time. While both people in the relationship may profit, one may be investing in the relationship for a future instead of immediate payoff.

Social Exchange Theory is often linked with mentoring in the literature. Several researchers have already examined the mentoring relationship through the lens of Social Exchange Theory (Eby et al., 2008; Ehigie et al., 2011; Kennett & Lomas, 2015; Parise & Forret, 2008; Reddick et al., 2012). According to Eby and associates, “this theory is particularly well-suited for understanding mentoring since it is most applied to moderately intimate relationships” (p. 359). In mentoring, the rewards and costs may be tangible, but are more likely something abstract and intrinsic instead of extrinsic (Ehigie et al., 2011). Rewards, or benefits, might include “generativity, loyalty, enhanced job performance, rewarding personal experience, or recognition by others” while costs, or barriers might incorporate “protégé unwillingness to learn, sabotage, deception, and interpersonal difficulty” (Eby et al., 2008, p. 359).

Reddick and associates (2012) researched graduate students serving as mentors to undergraduate students working on degrees beyond the field of education. In their research, they connected their work to the Social Exchange Theory and reminded that that “humans are rational, self-interested actors who want to maximize their own goals” (p. 37). Parise and Forret (2008) studied mentors in business settings. They determined that people volunteered to mentor because of the personal gains that they felt received. Likewise, Reddick and associates, in their work with graduate student mentors, proposed that mentors engaged in mentoring relationships because they perceived a gain from the experience. A gain that they could not receive independently and therefore it was beneficial for them to serve as a mentor.

Social Exchange Theory and study findings. Similar to the other studies connecting Social Exchange Theory and mentoring, this study sought to examine the data through the lens of this theory on social relationships. Social Exchange Theory was not discussed explicitly with the participants, but they were asked questions about perceived benefits and barriers to mentoring and if they considered these when determining whether or not to mentor a preservice teacher. The graduate student participants shared several ways in which they felt that could benefit from serving as a mentor. These benefits encompassed tangible rewards such as payment, tuition vouchers, or free professional development courses. Benefits that were more inherent involved improvements in knowledge, skills, and attitude, networking opportunities, additional assistance for their students, a sense of pride and accomplishment, as well as a way to give to the next generation of teachers. Angela offered a good example of the intrinsic takeaways when she said, “I just feel so fortunate that I get to work with so many different types of people and influence them.”

At the same time, participants offered perceived barriers to mentoring. These barriers included the competing demands with being a graduate student and a mentor, internal struggles such as confidence and vulnerability, poor attitudes from mentees, unprepared mentees, and constraints on their time. For example, Cindy, who was willing to give the extra time and assistance to a mentee, communicated the negative side of mentoring when she said, "I think that if they don't have a good attitude and that they don't want to stay late and they don't want to improve then that's when there's a bigger barrier of I'm wasting my time for this person who doesn't want to be here."

As noted in the second theme, *helps others*, the graduate student participants tended to fall into one of two approaches to mentoring. They either followed an unconditional approach or a conditional approach. The individuals that aligned with the unconditional approach were altruistic in nature and displayed a commitment to mentoring no matter the circumstance. An exemplar for the unconditional approach, Jasmine, was admittedly "madly obsessed with grooming teachers." She shared that she felt she was good at what she did, she enjoyed working with the next generation of teachers, and was frustrated that she didn't have a preservice teacher to mentor every semester. Jasmine did identify some possible obstacles. She expressed that it can be frustrating when mentees do not come with the knowledge base that she felt they should have. "I need someone to teach them pedagogy...Because instead of spending my time fine tuning a classroom management plan, I've got to teach you how to teach the lesson because you truly don't understand how to multiply two digits by two digits."

Despite acknowledging less than desirable circumstances such as this, Jasmine seemed committed to the task of mentoring and not deterred by any possible obstacles. When questioned about her commitment level, she replied, "I would do it for no credit. I would do it if

it pissed me off. I'm telling you, I'm mildly obsessed with grooming teachers because it's so important." Based on Jasmine's responses, it appears that she does base her decision to mentor or not on the notions of Social Exchange Theory. Jasmine does recognize rewards and costs and considers both, but for her, the mathematical equation of rewards verses costs will always end with a positive profit. She is committed to mentoring and the "math" of the Social Exchange Theory will always yield the same result.

The other approach to mentoring that fell under the theme of *helps others* was the conditional approach. Participants who adhered to the conditional approach were interested in mentoring preservice teachers but realized that the situation was not always ideal. These participants seemed to consider the circumstances before agreeing to mentor. An exemplar of the conditional approach to mentoring was Willow. Throughout her interviews, Willow expressed excitement about mentoring a preservice teacher, even though she had not yet had the opportunity to do that. She was passionate about working with her students with disabilities and wanted to pass that enthusiasm and awareness on to others in hopes that they would want to work in an ESE setting. That being said, she regularly verbalized thoughts that demonstrated her conditional attitude. An example of these types of statements was when she said, "If I have to babysit you and get into the whys...and I'm patting you on the back trying to make you feel better, then I don't want you there. I don't want to give anybody Alka Seltzer." Willow also made comments like, "If they have that approach [open-mindedness] coming in the door, I'm more than happy to welcome them" which confirmed her conditional approach to mentoring preservice teachers.

As opposed to teachers like Jasmine, teachers with a conditional approach, like Willow, probably view the mathematics of Social Exchange Theory with a heavier emphasis on the cost.

While she also acknowledged rewards and costs in the mentoring relationship for the mentor, her continual talk about the potential frustrations may cause her to never engage in a mentoring relationship as the mentor if she feels the costs are always too high. Similar to Jasmine, the “math” of the Social Exchange Theory may never work out correctly for her. With Willow, her profit may always end in a negative if she places too much emphasis on the possible costs. It is important to note, however, that since Willow had not yet had the opportunity to mentor preservice teachers, it is unknown if she would actually agree to engage in a mentoring if presented the opportunity. Also, it is unknown if she would feel differently about rewards and costs after having served as a mentor.

Jasmine and Willow exemplified opposing stances within the *helps others* theme. While the other five participants tended to lean more heavily towards either the unconditional or conditional approach, some expressed feelings that agreed with both approaches. For example, Eugene, who was committed to mentoring because of his own personally positive experience as a mentee, was honest about not wanting to serve as a mentor at the current time. He admitted to having more difficulty in the second year of his doctoral program than he did in the first year. Having changed schools and grade levels this year as a teacher, Eugene also shared that he was in a learning phase at work. Furthermore, having a wife and family at home posed yet another competing demand on Eugene’s decision to engage in mentoring. When asked if he would mentor again at this moment, he replied “no.” He stated that learning, both at work and with his graduate program, were the priority right now. In his words, “I’m like, just let me learn. I’m just in a learning phase right now. Let me learn.”

Considering his current life situation, Eugene was a good example of a participant that most likely completed the mathematical formula of the Social Exchange Theory to determine if

he was going to engage in a mentoring relationship. Eugene may or may not be familiar with the actual premises of Social Exchange Theory, but it appears that he put the logic into place. As was evident in his interview, the rewards of mentoring historically hold substantial weight in the equation, but his current costs were too pricey to take the risk of entering into a new mentoring relationship. A solid set of rewards minus a few expensive costs left him with a negative profit and with saying “no” to mentoring at present.

Other participants seemed that they would also follow Eugene and abide by the formula set forth in the Social Exchange Theory. Meg expressed excitement for mentoring. When asked about mentoring in the past, she replied, “I absolutely loved it...I think I am good at what I do. And so, I like being able to share that and share my passion with other people. So, whether it be...leading by example...giving advice. I think it is really valuable to pass that on to somebody else.” However, when asked about whether she would mentor at present, while still a graduate student, her response was, “I think that in any given scenario that you would weigh in if you want to do an opportunity [mentor a preservice teacher].” In addition, Meg expressed thoughts that showed she considered the needs of her students when considering serving as a mentor. “I also think that accepting, that being a mentor, could honestly have to do with the dynamics of your class in any given year. So, if I have a lot of high-need children in my class, then maybe that wouldn’t be a good year to accept another role for me to have because I want to be able to give my all to a mentee and I wouldn’t want it to necessarily take away from my class.”

Based on these responses, it appears that Meg also uses the formula of the Social Exchange Theory to make her decision whether to participate in a mentoring relationship or not. If the rewards seem high, like being able to help another in the field, then she will predict a

positive profit and will serve as a mentor. If the costs seem high, like compromising her work with her students, then she will predict a negative profit and decide not to serve as a mentor.

An adapted conceptualization of Social Exchange Theory. Homans (1958), with others experts in agreement, set forth a theory that would serve as a predictor to human behavior when it comes to social interactions with the development of the Social Exchange Theory. The original formula was a simple mathematical equation that built its foundation on economic exchange. The rewards minus the cost will equal the profit. (Figure 1). If an individual sees the rewards as pricier, they yield a positive profit and participate. If the costs are more expensive, there is a negative profit and the individual does not participate. While the premise seems to make simple sense, Homans does remind that the feelings of one person may rely heavily on the behavior of another. Stafford (2008) also reminded that this equation does not deal strictly with numbers, but with living creatures. People may feel more strongly about the rewards or the costs and the formula doesn't work perfectly every time.

This study sought to look at the perceived benefits and barriers as well as the motivation to engage in mentoring from PK-12 teachers who were also graduate students that may participate in mentoring relationships with preservice, undergraduate teachers. An analysis of the data demonstrated that veteran teachers do identify possible benefits and barriers to mentoring. It was also evident that the teachers, at time, weigh one against the other when deciding whether or not to mentor. This being said, it is also apparent that the Social Exchange Theory does not apply neatly in each participant's decision-making process. As noted with Jasmine, her rewards always seem to outweigh her costs. With Willow, her costs will typically be pricier than her rewards. There were other participants, like Eugene and Meg, who seemed to use the Social Exchange Theory formula as it was intended. As noted by Stafford earlier,

working with living creatures is dependent on different elements not present in a strictly mathematical formula.

After analyzing data and reflecting upon the Social Exchange Theory, a confirmation was made between the findings of this study and the theory as it currently stands. A visual of this alignment can be seen in the adjusted conceptualization of Social Exchange Theory in Figure 2.

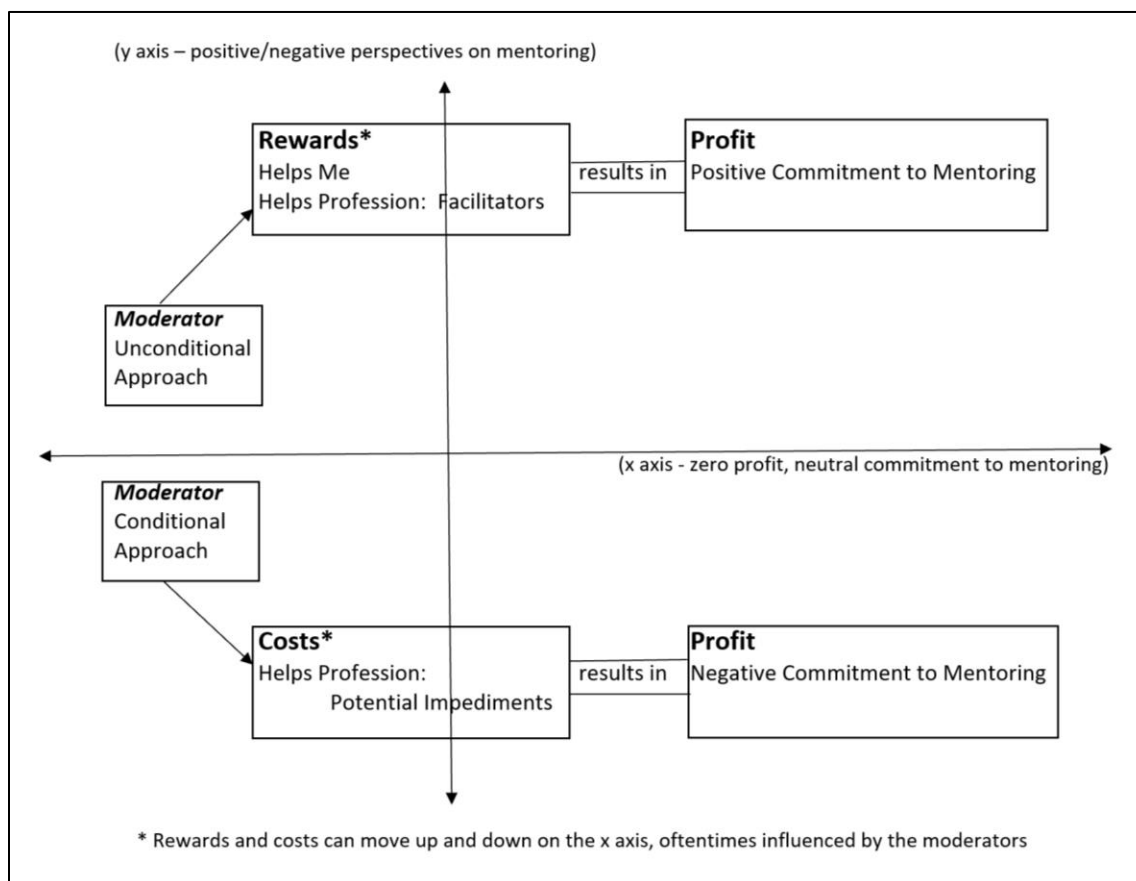


Figure 2. Omeechevarria's Adapted Conceptualization of Social Exchange Theory (2019). This figure illustrates Omeechevarria's adapted conceptualization of themes concerning mentoring in alignment to Homan's (1958) original mathematical formula for Social Exchange Theory.

The first theme, *helps me*, and the first part of the third theme, *helps profession (facilitators)* demonstrate the perceived rewards when mentoring a preservice teacher. This includes rewards such as: better communication skills, a more flexible attitude, strengthened relationship building tools, new knowledge, extra pay, tuition vouchers, additional professional

development, and a wider network of professional relationships. The second part of the third theme, *helps profession (potential impediments)*, illustrate the perceived costs when mentoring a preservice teacher. This includes costs such as: loss of time or time conflicts, confidence issues, vulnerability, and facing competing demands.

The rewards are compared to the costs and a profit, or commitment to mentoring, is determined. However, as has been noted, it is not always that simple of a calculation. The second theme, *helps others*, acts as an optional moderator for those who strongly portray the unconditional or conditional approach to mentoring. No matter what the simple equation would determine is the profit, the optional moderators of unconditional and conditional approach can supersede the amount of rewards or benefits and shift the profit in the direction that the individual inherently chooses.

Strengths and Limitations

Strengths. One strength of this study is that it fills a gap in the literature. There is an abundance of literature on mentoring in general as well as mentoring within the field of education and mentoring preservice teachers. Additionally, there is a growing body of literature about using graduate students as mentors to undergraduate students. This study was unique in that it focused on graduate students who are also teachers who could mentor preservice undergraduate students. It provides new information to the literature that another study has not yet been able to provide. Another strength of this study is that it can inform policy and practice concerning mentoring. Faculty designing programs for graduate and undergraduate students in education may use the findings to make changes in coursework to include content on mentoring. They may also decide to change their practice for partnering undergraduates for field work based on the findings.

Additionally, the methodological approach used in this study is a strength. Since this study was used a qualitative approach, the researcher was the instrument and was able to get close to the participants. The participants were interviewed, which allowed them to share their thoughts in an open-ended forum. The voices of the participants were heard. Also, with this being qualitative research, no preconceived notions were made concerning participant responses and this researcher was open to whatever emerged from the data. The data analysis and conclusions also included rich, thick descriptions of the data, which served as another strength to the study.

Limitations. There were several limitations that restricted the findings of this study. For one, the number of participants was very small ($n=7$). The study was initially designed for 10 participants, keeping in mind that if 10 participants did not yield adequate data, a larger number of participants would be sought. This researcher made every effort to make contact with all potential participants for this study. All graduate faculty at UNF were contacted to ask if advertisements could be made at graduate class sessions. With many courses delivered online, this researcher was only able to advertise in four graduate classes, talking to only approximately 45 graduate students. Additionally, this researcher faced difficulty contacting students by email, as multiple entities on campus stated they were not able to send emails to students advertising the study. Program directors were able to contact students on this researcher's behalf to assist in recruitment, but only a few individuals responded. Many graduate students did not meet the requirements of the case. For example, some were former teachers, but currently working in an administrative or coaching role. Also, some qualified participants who initially responded to the advertisement eventually chose not to participate.

A second limitation was that all seven of the participants were from the same university. All participants were graduate students from UNF's College of Education and Human Services. Additionally, they only represented two of UNF's 15 graduate programs in the COEHS. The two graduate programs that were represented by the participants were Educational Leadership and Applied Behavior Analysis. Moreover, neither Educational Leadership nor ABA are graduate programs specifically focused on teacher education (e.g. Literacy, Exceptional Student Education, or Professional Education), which may have yielded different perspectives from participants. Furthermore, the seven participants were all from one geographic area and worked within only three school districts.

There were also limitations to this study in terms of the process itself. For example, not all participants decided to be interviewed a second time as part of the member check process. All seven participants were contacted about being interviewed a second time to review initial data analysis of their first interviews and to add additional thoughts, but only two chose to partake in a second interview. Also, it is hard to make generalizations to a larger population since this research only focuses on a small population of individuals.

Implications of Findings

Practice. The findings from this study have implications for educational practice. One of the potential impediments that was identified was time. All of the participants brought up the fact that mentoring well takes additional time for mentors that may already be busy with work, family, and graduate school. While some participants felt that the additional time was not a deterrent, all noted that it made life more difficult. Universities, districts, and/or schools could assist mentors with their concern with time by providing release time for teachers that choose to mentor. Mentor teachers could use this time to complete tasks for mentoring, meet with their

mentee or peer mentors, participate in professional development, or work on graduate school assignments. This would help mentor teachers to balance their competing demands of work, school, mentoring, and family as well as other commitments.

Another way policy could be impacted by the findings of this study is with the two-way relationship between universities and mentor teachers in the field. More than one participant mentioned that the additional pay and/or tuition vouchers offered by universities are perceived as a great benefit by mentor teachers. Universities can continue to offer these, as they are able, to teachers as an incentive. Also, at least one participant stated wanting to be able to communicate more with university faculty about experiences and needs. Universities could keep the lines of communication open and allow mentor teachers to offer suggestions and feedback in terms preservice teacher preparation. University faculty may want to solicit mentor teacher input when developing curriculum or assignments to consider their practicality in a classroom setting.

In addition, based on the findings of this study, universities may want to adjust how they partner preservice teachers with novices in the field. One participant suggested that mentor teachers should play a bigger role in matching mentors and mentees. She expressed her belief that mentors and mentees should be partnered based on personalities and instructional styles. Having university faculty and mentor teachers share in the matching of mentors and mentees could result in more fittingly matched teams.

Identifying a new potential group of mentors for preservice teachers is another implication from the findings of this study. The participants of this study were all graduate students and many of them shared that they would be willing to mentor while in graduate school. Universities may want to tap into their own population of graduate students when searching for eligible mentors for their undergraduate, preservice teachers. Matching graduate and

undergraduate students from the same universities for mentoring relationships could not only provide more mentors, but it could also develop into something more. Universities might offer their graduate students credit for leadership classes or tuition vouchers for working with their undergraduate students. They could also incorporate some of the graduate classwork into the work that the graduate mentors are already doing with their undergraduate mentees in the field.

Furthermore, ensuring opportunities for mentors to meet with other mentors is another implication that can come from the findings of this study. Some of the participants expressed a desire to meet with other mentors, also working with preservice teachers, in order to share ideas and network. Universities and school districts could provide these peer connections and chances for mentors to collaborate with one another.

Education and training. The findings of this study also provide implications for education and training concerning mentoring. The participants, speaking from a graduate student perspective, reported many perceived benefits to serving as a mentor to preservice teachers. Knowing this information, university faculty may want to use graduate students more often as mentors to their undergraduates. The coursework in both the undergraduate and graduate courses could be related to participating in a mentoring relationship. Graduate coursework could incorporate more training on how to communicate and provide feedback when mentoring and/or integrate learning on how to be an effective leader. Moreover, mentoring requirements could be added to the graduate student programs of study so that they are having the opportunity to develop leadership skills and grow in knowledge, which were benefits of being a mentor that were identified by the participants of this study. Furthermore, universities matching preservice teachers with veterans in the field may choose to require mentors to be graduate students, or to have already completed a graduate program in order to be eligible to mentor.

Likewise, the findings of this study could provide implications related to the training of mentors in general. Multiple participants remarked that they desired more mentor training and feedback on their ability to mentor effectively. There are already some trainings in place to prepare mentors for training, but universities and districts may want to reevaluate their trainings to see if it is adequately preparing veteran teachers to mentor novices in the field. Also, the participants expressed a desire to receive feedback from university partners on their mentoring efforts. University faculty could put more energy into spending time with and observing mentors to provide them instruction and constructive criticism on their work as a mentor.

Suggestions for Future Research

Analysis of and reflection on the findings of this case study has shown potential areas for future research. For one, examining the mentoring relationship in different classroom contexts might be enlightening. In this study, the two participants that had not yet had an opportunity to mentor believed their classroom setting (ESE and foreign language) might be the reason why they had not been able to mentor. The participant from an ESE setting had a conditional approach to mentoring. It is unknown if her viewpoint would have been different if she had mentored already. A future area of study could be to examine the perspective of teachers working in ESE, foreign language, or any other context outside of the core, general education classroom that have already mentored. It would be interesting to look at their standpoints on mentoring and compare that to the perspective of the mentor teacher in a core, general education classroom. Would their views on mentoring be the same or different?

Another potential area of study, that came from the findings of this study, could be examining the perspective of mentor teachers that were mentored verses those that were not mentored. More than one participant in this study attributed their desire to mentor to their own

experience as a mentee. These participants came from both good and bad mentee occurrences, but either way, that experience prompted them to be a mentor. One participant noted that she had not been mentored and felt that left her as a disadvantage when beginning to serve as mentor. She did not have the background experience to build upon. Comparing the perspectives on mentoring from mentor teachers that were mentored and the teachers were not mentored could add more to the body of knowledge on mentoring.

Also, this study examined the perspectives on mentoring of graduate students that were serving or could serve as mentors to preservice teachers. The viewpoint of the mentee was not studied. Another area of potential research is in investigating the perspective of the preservice teacher mentee that works with a graduate student mentor. From the mentee perspective, does the mentor attack the mentoring relationship differently than the non-graduate student mentor? This could be studied to determine if having a graduate student mentor is more beneficial than working with a mentor that is not or has not been a graduate student.

In addition, this study could be extended by interviewing the participants again to see how their perspectives have changed or not changed since the original interviews. While all participants were given the opportunity to be interviewed a second time, in order to member check and add additional information, only two participants agreed to a second interview and those interviews were only about a month after the initial interviews. A possible new angle for research would be to interview these same participants again, after more time has passed, to examine how participating in the study has impacted their perspectives on mentoring. Did the questioning process in the interview require them to reflect on their practice and beliefs in a way that changed them? Have they mentored again since the study and did the reflection process alter the way in which they interact with their new mentee? Asking questions such as these, in

an extended study, could provide further insight into the mentor perspective as well as offer knowledge about how the reflection process can transform a mentor's beliefs and practices.

Another idea for future research would be to examine how the adapted conceptualization of Social Exchange Theory, that was established through this study, works with other participants.

A quantitative study could be developed to substantiate the merit of this model.

Conclusions

This study captured the perspective of the PK-12 teacher mentor who also was in the role of graduate student. The findings of this study are important because the voice of this particular type of mentor has not been described in current research. Researchers have found that mentors experience benefits and barriers while serving in the role of mentor. This researcher sought to discover if the benefits and barriers were the same for teacher mentors who are also graduate students and how their graduate student status affected their decision to engage in mentoring relationships. Data analysis yielded three themes that encapsulated the voice of the graduate student teacher mentors. Those themes were *helps me*, *helps others*, and *helps profession*. The participants demonstrated willingness to mentor preservice teachers and revealed rewards and potential costs that come with that type of relationship.

In connecting the participants' revelations back to the literature, it appears that the participants in this study held similar beliefs to those of mentor teachers and graduate student mentors in the literature. Both the participants of this study and the ones in the literature felt that mentoring novices offered a way to increase in knowledge, skills, and attitude. Also, both the participants and the mentors in the literature seem to believe mentees and the teaching profession are helped when an effective mentoring relationship is in place to support the novice teacher. The participants also expressed potential barriers to mentoring that were similar to the potential

barriers reported in the literature. Time appeared to be a top concern for mentors in both groups. The participants' feelings on mentoring while being a graduate student also aligned with the research on graduate student mentors. Preparation for future careers, attainment of leadership and communication skills, and a "pay it forward" mindset were prevalent with both.

The findings of this study also related to Social Exchange Theory. This theory posits that individuals will elect to participate in social relationships if they feel they will profit, after weighing the rewards against the costs. Some of the participants of this study did express that they would consider the helps and possible obstacles before agreeing to serve as a mentor to a preservice teacher, and thus abiding by the principles of the Social Exchange Theory. At the same time, other participants appeared to rely more heavily on the rewards or costs, therefore making the Social Exchange Theory equation lean in one direction or the other no matter the current situation.

The findings of this study were significant because they captured a voice that was missing from the literature. Education practice and training can be positively influenced by reflections of the participants. University faculty may consider how they work with and train mentors as well as thinking about better ways to match mentors and mentees. Undergraduate and graduate programs may be altered to include mentoring as a focus in the curriculum. Additionally, university faculty may contemplate how they can partner their graduate and undergraduate students in education and how their assignments can be completing in the field in mentoring situations. Nevertheless, the limitations of this case study restrict the widespread reach of these findings. In order to make a stronger impact, more research on graduate student mentors in the field of education needs to be conducted.

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Appendix A: Approved Recruitment Flyer**How do you feel about mentoring?**

Are you a UNF COEHS graduate student (or recently graduated graduate student) who works in a PK-12 setting?

Would you be willing to talk with a doctoral student about mentoring preservice teachers?

If so, your input is needed.

Participants must be a UNF COEHS graduate student or have graduated from a UNF COEHS graduate program within the last year.

Participants must also be a practicing PK-12 teacher.

Participants may or may not have mentored preservice teachers in their career.

If interested, please contact Melissa Omeechevarria at
n00071973@ospreys.unf.edu.

UNF IRB Number: 858351-2
Approval Date: 09-04-2018
Processed on behalf of UNF's IRB



Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Before we discuss your mentoring experience. Let's begin with reflecting up on your experiences as a graduate student.

What led you to enroll in graduate school and in your particular program of study?

What professional goals or long-term plans do you have relating to the completion of your graduate program?

Thinking about your graduate school experience, how have you grown professionally or personally as a result of being a graduate student?

What successes have you experienced in graduate school? Struggles?

Now, let's shift the focus of our discussion to you mentoring experience and then we will consider the two topics simultaneously.

Have you mentored preservice teachers before? In other words, have you worked with undergraduate observation students, pre-interns/field students, or student teachers/interns in your classroom?

Do you have the qualifications to supervise preservice teachers? In other words, do you have three or more years of teaching experience, satisfactory evaluations, and Clinical Educator Training?

If they have mentored preservice teachers before...

How many preservice teachers have you mentored?

How many were interns/student teachers? Pre-interns/field students? Observation students?

How did you begin mentoring preservice teachers?

In general, how would you describe or categorize your experience mentoring preservice teachers?

Did you mentor preservice teachers prior to beginning your graduate program? Did you continue mentoring once you became a graduate student?

If you mentored both before and during graduate school, do you feel your experience as a mentor was different after becoming a graduate student? How?

Reflecting back on your mentoring experiences, what do you perceive as the benefits to serving as a mentor to preservice teachers?

How do you feel that these benefits relate to you as a graduate student?

What do you perceive as a barrier to serving as a mentor to preservice teachers?

How do you feel that these barriers relate to you as a graduate student?

How do these benefits and barriers affect your decision to mentor preservice teachers?

How does your status as a graduate student affect your decision to mentor preservice teachers?

Do you still mentor preservice teachers? Are you still willing to mentor preservice teachers? If not, why not?

If they have not mentored preservice teachers before...

What has kept you from mentoring preservice teachers?

Has your status as a graduate student kept you from mentoring preservice teachers? If so, how?

Even though you have not mentored preservice teachers, what do you perceive to be the benefitting of serving as their mentor?

How do you feel that these benefits relate to the graduate school experience?

What do you perceive to be the barriers to serving as a mentor to preservice teachers?

How do you feel that these barriers relate to the graduate school experience?

How do you see these perceived benefits and barriers impacting your decision to not mentor preservice teachers at this point in your career?

Are you open to mentoring preservice teachers in the future? If not, why not?

All participants...

What should I have asked you that I didn't think to ask?

Is there anything else that you care to add?

Appendix C: Approved Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent

I am a doctoral student at the University of North Florida (UNF) and I am conducting a research study on graduate students mentoring preservice teachers as part of my coursework for earning a Doctorate in Education (EdD).

If you take part in my study, you will be asked to participate in a minimum of two face-to-face, one-on-one interviews. I anticipate that each interview session will last approximately one hour and with two interviews, your total time commitment to the study will be approximately two hours. The interviews will be conducted on UNF's campus. The questions are semi-structured and mainly open-ended. Your responses will not be linked to your identity. When the findings of this study are published, a pseudonym will be assigned to you in an effort to protect your privacy. Only authorized personnel will have access to your responses in any other format.

Since this study focuses on your experience as a graduate student as well as your experience as a mentor, you may feel you benefit from participating both professionally and as a student. Others may also benefit from the information as it will expand the body of knowledge on mentoring and graduate students. Reflecting upon and discussing previous mentoring situations may bring negative experiences to mind that could be upsetting. If you do experience emotional distress as a result of participating, counseling services are available to you as a UNF student. You may contact UNF Counseling Services at 904-620-2602. Beyond the aforementioned potential hazard, no other risks or discomforts are anticipated. Please note, compensation will not be offered for your participation in this study, even in the event of injury or discomfort due to study participation.

Participants in this study must meet the following criteria: Be a UNF COEHS graduate student or have graduated from a UNF COEHS graduate program within the last year; Be a practicing PK-12 teacher; and May or may not have mentored preservice teachers in their career. Participation in this study is voluntary and there are no penalties for deciding not to participate, skipping questions, or withdrawing your participation. You may choose not to participate in this research without negatively impacting your relationship with UNF or your status as a graduate student. Additionally, the researcher has the right to terminate your participation in the study without consent.

If you have any questions or concerns with this study, please contact me or my dissertation chair, Dr. Kristine Webb. A copy of this form will be given to you to keep for your records. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or if you would like to contact someone about research-related injury, please contact the chair of the UNF Institutional Review board by calling 904-620-2498 or emailing irb@unf.edu.

Sincerely,

Melissa Omeechevarria

Dr. Kristine Webb


Redacted

Redacted

I _____ (print name) attest that I am at least 18 years of age and agree to take part in this research study.

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

UNF IRB Number: 858351-2 Approval Date: 09-04-2018 Processed on behalf of UNF's IRB 

Appendix D: Demographic Questionnaire

What is your gender?

Male

Female

What is your age?

18-24 yrs.

25-34 yrs.

35-44yrs.

45-54yrs.

55-64yrs.

65-74yrs.

What is your ethnicity?

White

Hispanic or Latino

Black or African American

Native American

Asian/Pacific Islander

Other: _____

How many years have you taught? _____

What grade level(s) and subject(s) have you taught?

Have you had Clinical Educator Training (CET)? *The state required training to host university students or mentor novice/peer teachers.*

Yes

No

What degree and program of study are you currently enrolled in the COEHS at UNF?

Master's

Doctorate

Program of Study: _____

Approximately what percentage of your graduate degree have you completed at this point?

Less than 25%

25%-50%

50%-75%

More than 75%

Appendix E: Institutional Review Board Approval

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
1 UNF Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32224-2665
904-620-2455 FAX 904-620-2457
Equal Opportunity/Equal Access/Affirmative Action Institution

MEMORANDUM


DATE: September 4, 2018

TO: Ms. Melissa Omeechevarria

VIA: Dr. Kristine Webb
Exceptional, Deaf, and Interpreter Education

FROM: Dr. Jennifer Wesely, Chairperson
On behalf of the UNF Institutional Review Board

RE: Review of New Project by the UNF Institutional Review Board
IRB#858351-2: "Dissertation - Graduate Students' Perspectives of the Benefits and Barriers to Mentoring Preservice Teachers"

UNF IRB Number: 858351-2
Approval Date: 09-04-2018
Processed on behalf of UNF's IRB 


This is to advise you that your project, "Dissertation - Graduate Students' Perspectives of the Benefits and Barriers to Mentoring Preservice Teachers" underwent "[Expedited](#)" [Categories 4, 6, & 7](#) review on behalf of the UNF Institutional Review Board. Your reviewer recommended approval without further modifications.

This approval applies to your project in the form and content as submitted to the IRB for review. All participants must receive a stamped and dated copy of the approved informed consent document when possible. Any variations or modifications to the approved procedures or documents must be cleared with the IRB prior to implementing such changes. *For example*, if you plan to make changes to your stamped and dated informed consent form, it will be necessary to submit a copy of the revised form via an amendment so that it can be reviewed and approved prior to use. Once approved, a new stamp and date will be included on the revised consent form so that it can be used. To submit an amendment, please complete an [Amendment Request Document](#) and submit it along with any updated documents affected by the changes via a new package in IRBNet. Any unanticipated problems involving risk and any occurrence of serious harm to subjects and others shall be reported by completing this [Event Report Form](#) and sending it promptly to the IRB within 3 business days.

Your study has been approved as of 09/04/2018. When you are ready to close your project, please complete a [Closing Report Form](#). Please note that it will be necessary to create a new package in IRBNet in order to submit amendments, status reports, or closing reports in the future. All applicable records relating to this research shall be retained for at least 3 years after completion of the research.

CITI Course Completion Reports are valid for 3 years. The CITI training for renewal will become available 90 days before the current CITI training expires. Please renew your CITI training when necessary and ensure that all key personnel maintain current CITI training. Individuals can access CITI by following this link: <http://www.citiprogram.org/>. Should you have questions regarding your project or any other IRB issues, please contact the research integrity unit of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs by emailing IRB@unf.edu or calling (904) 620-2455.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within UNF's records. All records shall be accessible for inspection and copying by authorized representatives of the department or agency at reasonable times and in a reasonable manner. A copy of this approval may also be sent to the dean and/or chair of your department.

UNF IRB Number: <u>858351-2</u> Approval Date: <u>09-04-2018</u> Processed on behalf of UNF's IRB 

Appendix F: Demographic of Individual Participants

Pseudonym	Gender Age Ethnicity	Years of Teaching	Grades Subjects	CET	Mentoring Experience	Degree Program	Percent Done
Jessie	Female 25-34 White	4	9-12 Foreign Language	No	None	Doctorate Ed Leadership	0 - 25%
Cindy	Female 25-34 White	7	K, all 3 rd , ELA 4 th , all	Yes	Yes – intern and other preservice teachers	Master's Ed Leadership	0 - 25%
Willow	Female 45-54 Black/AA	10 (+9 as para)	K-2 ESE Self- contained	Yes	None	Master's ABA	75 - 100%
Jasmine	Female 25-34 Black/AA	5	2 nd – 4 th Math Science	Yes	Yes – multiple interns and other preservice teachers	Master's Ed Leadership	75 - 100%
Meg	Female 25-34 White	7	K, all 1 st , all	No	Yes – preservice teachers	Master's ABA	75 - 100%
Eugene	Male 35-44 Black/AA	5	9 th – 12 th Algebra I, Intensive Math 6 th – 8 th Math 3 rd Math Science	No	Yes – peers beginning their teaching career	Doctorate Ed Leadership	25 – 50%
Angela	Female 55-64 White	25	Montessori Ages 3-6	No	Yes – multiple preservice teachers learning the Montessori model	Master's Early Childhood Ed Leadership	0 - 25%

Curriculum Vitae – Melissa Omeechevarria**Education**

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership
University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Florida
April 2019

Masters of Education in Elementary Education
University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Florida
August 2002

Bachelors of Science in Elementary Education
Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida
December 1998

Professional Certifications

Professional Certificate, Florida Department of Education, 1999 - present
Elementary Education, grades 1-6
ESOL endorsed, Reading endorsed, Gifted endorsed

National Board Certified, 2004 – 2014
Early Childhood Generalist

Professional Experience

Charter Schools USA, Jacksonville, Florida
Curriculum Resource Teacher/Academic Coach, Professional Development Facilitator

University of North Florida, College of Education and Human Services, Jacksonville, Florida
Clinical Faculty/Visiting Instructor

Duval County Public Schools, Jacksonville, Florida
District Cadre, Professional Development/Teacher Induction Program

Jacksonville University, Jacksonville, Florida
Adjunct Professor, School of Education

Duval County Public Schools, Jacksonville, Florida
Elementary Teacher

Duval County Public Schools, Jacksonville, Florida
Substitute Teacher